PETER MADDOCKS

EAGLE

DAVID SLINN

HATCH

REMEMBERING PETER O'DONNELL

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PAT MILLS REMEMBERS

JOHN HICKLENTON

PETER MADDOCKS'

Peter Maddocks was born in Birmingham on 1 April 1928. In 1939 he won a scholarship to the Moseley School of Art in Birmingham and later became a leading cartoonist, contributing to many of the UK's leading Daily and Sunday newspapers in a distinguished career. Among his creations he can boast *The Family Ness*, *Penny Crayon* and *Jimbo and the Jet Set* for the BBC. Retired and now living in southern Spain, Peter has put down his pencil in favour of a paint brush and canvas. Presented here is the second part of his creation 'Four D Jones', which ran from 1955 to 1965 in the *Daily Express*.

For more of Peter's current work check out his website: http://www.petermaddocks.com

Four D. Jones
BY MADDOCKS

I CAN'T HELP IT! IT HAPPENS ALL THE TIME

WHAT'S GOING ON? ARE THEY TWINS, QUADS, OR SOMETHING?

HE HAS A KNACK OF DRAWING PEOPLE, AND THEY COME TO LIFE

QUICKLY, MAN, PUMP THE PUMP FOR ALL YOU'RE WORTH

THIS IS CRAZY, WHAT HAS A PUMP GOT TO DO WITH IT?

J.1098

Four D. Jones
BY MADDOCKS

JONES PUMPS WATER, WHILE VINCENT SQUIRTS AT THE MANY 'IKABODS'

WHAT'S HE WANT WITH WATER?

FASTER, MAN, FASTER

WE WILL SOON KNOW WHO THE *REAL* IKABOD IS

J.1099.

THE FIVE IKABODS ARE DRENCHED WITH WATER...

... AND FOUR VANISH AS IF WASHED AWAY...

THANK YOU, VINCENT, THANK YOU

Four D. Jones
BY MADDOCKS

VINCENT AND JONES SQUIRT WATER ON FIVE IDENTICAL IKABODS. FOUR VANISH, LEAVING ONLY ONE VERY WET IKABOD.

THANK YOU, VINCENT

J.1100

WHAT'S GOING ON? WHAT HAPPENED TO THE OTHER FOUR?

STUDIO

THEY WERE FOUR SELF-PORTRAITS IN CRAYON. I HAVE AN UNFORTUNATE KNACK OF BRINGING MY DRAWINGS TO LIFE

AND YOU MEAN WATER WASHES THEM AWAY?

Four D. Jones
BY MADDOCKS

HONESTLY, THIS IS STARK RAVING MADDOCKS

ALAS, IT'S TRUE. MY CRAYON DRAWINGS COME TO LIFE AND WE HAVE TO WASH THEM AWAY WITH WATER

STUDIO

IF ONLY I COULD CONTROL MY CRAYON SO THAT THE DRAWINGS WOULD STAY ON THE CANVAS

JAM

I CAN SEE BY YOUR FACE YOU DO NOT BELIEVE ME SIT DOWN, MY FRIEND

YEAH, DRAW ME AND SEE WHAT HAPPENS

TO BE CONTINUED...

***Mike Burnett** reminisces about his childhood days of reading and collecting comics. If you want to join in the fun and reveal the origins of the day you got your comics, get in touch!*

MY COMICY SATURDAY

How it all began

My earliest memories of comics stemmed from my Dad bringing home a bunch of Busters and Valiants every week that he "liberated" whilst working in the print in London.

As he worked nights I would get the comics fresh in the morning and would settle down to Saturday breakfast with a great read to hand (my parents were easy going breakfast people rather than the dictator style breakfast loony I have become with my kids!!).

The life changing comic event for me though was the day that my Mum brought me home Spiderman Comics Weekly #2, complete with the weird free gift plane. I hadn't asked for the comic but as soon as I started reading Spiderman something clicked. I was sucked into this fantastic world of interesting characters, amazing villains, longer plotlines and above all a main hero who was utterly flawed. It seemed like a special world and I always felt that in the early days of Marvel UK they had a way of engaging with the reader and making us feel special. I had no idea that these were reprints of US comics at this early stage and I can truly say that I have never looked forward to something as much as I did those weekly fixes of Spiderman and later on Mighty World of Marvel.

There is more than one comic reader out there!!

My life carried on sublimely every weekend although the grim spectre of secondary school was looming on the horizon. Sure enough secondary school was horrible until I got talking to a chap called Terry in my class who happened to notice that I was reading Spiderman Comics Weekly. We got chatting and I am still chatting with my Terry my best friend about comics 35 years later!!

Terry opened my eyes to the US market and the fact that UK newsagents in those heady days had real comics on their shelves instead of gaudy, temporary, flavour of the month, nonsense that they have now. We used to spend Saturday mornings trawling round various newsagents in North London looking for Marvel and DC comics. And do you know what? In amongst my work related nightmares I still have dreams about popping into newsagents and finding a pile of mint condition comics. We were particularly keen on a shop called the Candy Box in Edmonton where the chap had masses of comics in revolving stands and we used to feed on them like voracious vultures just leaving the Prez and Kamandi comics on the stands like old bits of flesh on a carcass. Although saying that, some of those Kamandis had great covers - e-bay here I come!

We would then return to my house for lunch and to read our comics. I can still taste my Mum's egg sandwiches and the cans of limeade and lager. Those days were and still are incredibly special to me and I've been lucky to have a mate like Terry.

The Mitchell Accord

It was around this time that me and Terry started to be a little competitive in relation to getting the best comics and as we approached the Candy Box our pace would quicken and we would hit the stands like a comic freak tsunami. The situation came to a head one Saturday afternoon when we went to a shop called Cassies. This shop had all of its comics in a large cardboard box on the floor. Terry got there first and my heart sunk as he pulled out a load of DC 100 page specials including some beautiful Justice League of America comics. There was only one copy of each in the box, Terry got the lot and I sulked all the way home. It was at this juncture that we drew up the famous (well, it was to us anyway!) Mitchell Accord named after the road where I lived. We basically agreed to collect certain items to avoid anymore sulking by me and boy could I sulk then! Amongst the full Mitchell Accord Terry got Captain America. There was no Hulk or Spiderman to divide up as they were still non-distributed.

We expanded our Saturday comic searches to include a second hand bookshop called Comyns that had some great old comics and some brilliant Shadow paperbacks. The shop also had some "lively" adult material hanging from the ceiling in clear bags and as my poor Mum was the holder of my pocket money she had to endure far too many hours in the shop. Funnily enough, our entrance into the shop coincided with the departure of all the men in the shop!

Over the years, both Terry and I have dropped comics temporarily out of our lives but as at the time of writing I have amassed another large Silver and Bronze age collection including those blasted JLA 100 pagers and the early SMCW comics. Just looking at the covers (as I do a lot) whizzes me back to those heady and exciting Saturdays..

Jeez, no wonder nostalgia is such big business! ●

SPOOF SPOOKS ON-THE-LOOSE

BY JOHN DEVANEY

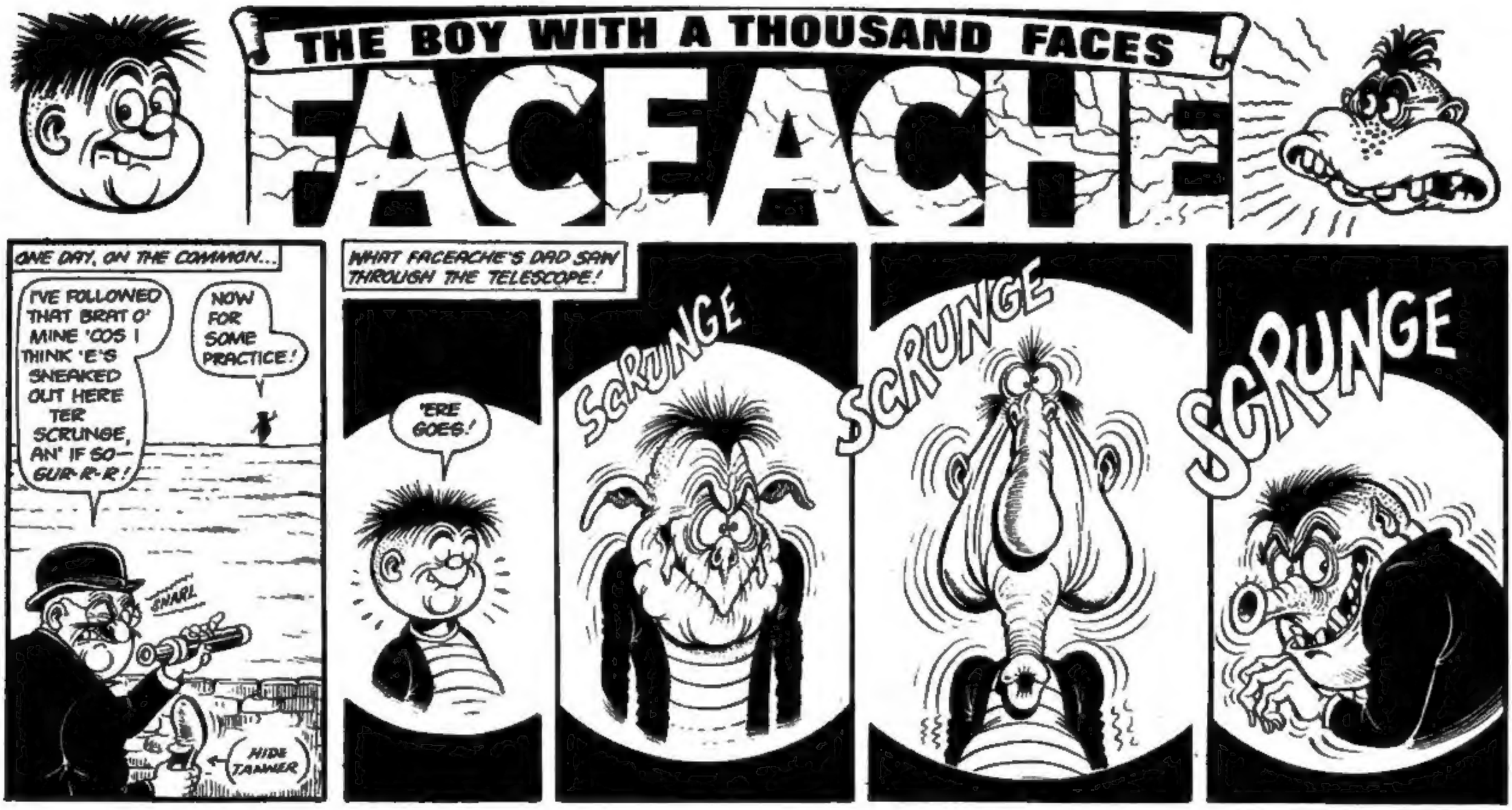
PART TWO

The Scooby-Doobied Seventies represented a peak 'Funky Phantom' decade for televised spookarama according to the huge popularity of the Hanna Barbera cartooniverse! British comics, likewise, were ringing-the-changes from the bat-infested belfry. As we discovered in the first part of this series of articles, ghoulish gags and bone-rattling merriment have always been lurking in the comic shadows since their inception. It was, however, only during the 1970s that this thematic tendency truly came to full frolicsome fruition. It was the two original bastions of comic strip beastliness, Ken Reid and Leo Baxendale, who ushered in a new age of anarchic slapstick phantasmagoria which, in the mid-60s, oozed slimily into life. In this second instalment of the Spooks On The Loose saga, I will be concentrating on the highly influential work of these two pioneers of kooky creepiness and how they led the way for artists, such as Tom Paterson, to popularize the spook comic curse throughout the two decades that followed.

Master of the anti-social Scrunge School of comic art, and prolific purveyor of grotesque caricature, was Ken Reid (1919-87). In the 1950s, he made a name for himself in the Beano with 'Roger The Dodger' and 'Grandpa' (the old codger who never grew up). His first dramatic entrance onto the spook stage was with goony goofy-toothed megastar monster 'Frankie Stein'; one of the most popular, and enduring, 'creature feature' characters in IPC's history. Professor Cube's clodhopper gothic clown made his debut in Wham (1964-68). Kind-hearted and ever-trustful Frankie shared with Ken's other popular character, 'Jonah', a playful big baby charm and bumbling barminess which soon endeared itself to the readers. The 1958 Beano character of Jonah was Ken's personal favourite and was instrumental in nurturing his facility for imaginatively extending the storylines into 'uncharted seas' of disaster laughter (a skill he later used for his horror hilarity strips; including 'Frankie Stein'). Like most kids, Frankie's misunderstood good intentions and helpless naivety usually landed him in big trouble. For Professor Cube, the intellectual 'square', he was a lame-brained liability who always managed to thwart his ingenious attempts at disowning him.

Ken, himself, eventually disowned 'Frankie Stein' to Robert Nixon when Frankie moved to Shiver & Shake in 1973. As with Mary Shelley's original literary monster, Frankie became a well-travelled character who could also be seen plaguing the pages of Whoopee (1974-75); Monster Fun (1975-76); and Buster (1976-86). Just as the original monster sought refuge in the polar wastes, Brian Walker's knockabout incarnation of Frankie can be seen rocket-sledged to the remote regions of Tibet in the 1984 Whoopee Annual. Predictably, he finds his way back to his dumbfounded, gibbering, father-figure with the abominable snowman as his new hairy playmate. These 'spooky come home' storylines echo

POSSIBLY THE MOST APPROPRIATELY NAMED CHARACTER IN COMICS: KEN REID'S 'FACEACHE'.


THE BOY WITH A THOUSAND FACES
FACEACHE
ONE DAY, ON THE COMMON...
I'VE FOLLOWED THAT BRAT O' MINE 'COS I THINK 'E'S SNEAKED OUT HERE TER SCRUNGE, AN' IF SO— GUR-R-R!
NOW FOR SOME PRACTICE!
SNARL
HIDE TANNER
WHAT FACEACHE'S DAD SAW THROUGH THE TELESCOPE!
'ERE GOES!
SCRUNGE
SCRUNGE
SCRUNGE

the true curse of Frankenstein: The creator, no matter how hard he tries, will never be rid of his creation. This certainly applied to Ken in relation to his next comic character.

Ken had a spook-infused penchant for the macabre which was given an infinitely pliable expression through a scrunge gremlin called 'Faceache'. 'The Boy with a 1000 Faces' initially appeared in Jet (1971) but soon took up permanent residence in Buster. Faceache, alias Ricky Rubberneck, was blessed (or cursed!) with a disconcertingly frightful shape-shifting facility; what could be referred to, in comic character terminology, as The 'Oddball' Syndrome! Faceache gave Ken the opportunity to expand upon his skill for rendering a multitude of facial characteristics; an inventive talent he developed on the 'Ali Ha-Ha & the 40 Thieves' strip for Dandy in 1960. A well-known cliché of incipient insanity is to boldly proclaim "I am a teapot!" Sure enough, Faceache went a stage further, in one memorable strip, by 'scrunging' himself into a hideous teapot with an elephant's trunk for a spout. Spike Milligan would probably have been suitably impressed by such transcendently and nonsensical inventiveness (Ken and TV Comic's 'Telegoons' strip would have been a match made in Bluebottle heaven!). On a deeper level, Faceache's acne afflicted, anthropomorphic, transformations gave expression to the hell-boy (animalistic) alter egos forever prowling beneath the social conventions of altar-boy saintliness; a duplicitous irony present in many British comic strips of the time.

Ken Reid's keen sense of the macabre attained new heights of artistic excellence during the early 1970s with his 'Creepy Creations' series of colour, page-size, posters for Shiver & Shake. Delightfully ludicrous titles such as 'The Blackghoul Tower', or the wonderfully alliterative 'The Crab-Nosed Clodhopper from Cleethorpes', were regularly suggested by the readers. Ken transmogrified these absurd notions into bizarre visual puns and weird, unsettling, scenarios which frequently veered into surreal nightmare territory. They were painstakingly drawn in a grotesque gothic style and, to my eyes, were atmospherically reminiscent of Mervyn Peake's fantastical and disturbing visionary realms. In 1974, Ken unearthed two follow-up poster series from the dark side of his fanciful imagination: 'Wanted Posters' and 'World Wide Wierdies' for Whoopee. A memorable example from this period was from Whoopee No.4 which featured a 'Wanted Poster' for Nathaniel Nogg The Alchemist (The Castor Oil Mixer) who resembled nothing less than a more gnarled and gruesome version of his earlier, Scrooge-like, Wham creation 'Jasper The Grasper' of No.13 Stingy Street. The vile taste of Castor Oil personified!

When the spook comic craze peaked in 1975, Ken contributed to IPC's Monster Fun an inventor-from-hell strip called 'Tom Horror's World' (a "Tomorrow's World" TV spoof) and another face-changing strip called 'Martha's Monster Make-Up'. Martha's uglification cream, a product of the Mallet Horror Film Studios, was a much more bestial 'in-your-face' brand than the fey whimsy lotion of Mike Lacey's 'Val's Vanishing Cream'. Ever since the 1960s, Ken had >

MORE FROM KEN, AND FROM THE MULTI-TALENTED LEO BAXENDALE.

revelled in absurd inversions of nice boy (or girl) stereotypes which fellow anarchic artist Leo Baxendale also riotously excelled in giving expression to. Ken and Leo were essentially a complementary odd Odham's double-act in which subliminal squelchiness was rampant! In Leo's contaminated corner we had the viral villains of 'Georgie's Germs' (Wham 1964-68; Pow 1968) together with the fat bodied 'Nervs' for Smash which Ken eventually took over. 'The Numskulls' seemed very tame in comparison! For the kids who never bothered to wash behind their ears, Georgie's parasitic anti-bathtime blighters, with General Dan Druff in charge of the germ warfare, were dirty neck microbial heroes always to be found on the soap-sud offensive.

The pratfalls and rewards of a risk-taking young lifestyle were frequently eulogised in 'Dare- A-Day Davie' (Pow 1967-68) and Ken, himself, dared a bit too much with the IPC censors when he attempted to get Davie to defy death itself and resurrect Frankenstein. This was considered too risqué by IPC and immediately withdrawn; eventually to resurface in David Britton's Wierd Fantasy Magazine in 1969. This, along with the occasional background hangman's noose, is indicative of how close to the censorship edge Ken sometimes strayed. His highly caricaturist work pushed the boundaries of what was possible (and acceptable) in the simplistically sanitised world of British comics. His distinctive, warts-and-all, black-humoured style represented a significant (and daring) breakthrough for British comic art. Ken was deservedly awarded Best Writer and Best Artist by The British Society of Strip Illustrators in 1978. He gave the spook tradition a form of comic humour that was both wickedly wacky and also, particularly with his unique poster portraits, visually disquieting. He was still working on his 'Faceache' scrunges when terminal heartache took him from us in 1987.

Lancashire lad Leo Baxendale, born in 1930, was another unconventional outsider artist who rejoiced in an 'anything goes', pun fixated, form of spook spoofery. Grimly Feendish (Smash 1966-68), subject of a wry singalong tribute by goth 'Punk Street Kids' band The Damned, remains one of the creepiest underworld villains ever conceived for a children's comic strip. His dastardly life began as arch crook of 'Eagle Eye Junior Spy' but he was soon cut loose to menace the back page of Smash. Grimly's black-robed, dark eyed, gothic demeanour oozed with criminal intent and stood-out like a rancid pustule on the spotty faces of pesky kid devilment. There was always a perverse enjoyment attached to contemplating those evil bats emerging from the fanged 'eternal night' cave of Grimly's mouth every week. How better to express the slimy decadence of the criminal underworld than those bestial squelchy things lurking in his cellar? Although obvious comparisons are made between Addams' Uncle Fester and Grimly, Leo drew his main inspiration from the shady Alec Guinness character in the 1954 Ealing black comedy "The Ladykillers". The slyly sinister edginess to Grimly Feendish was, as we shall see in Part Three, amplified to mordantly grim effect in the 2005 'Albion' epic by Alan Moore.

Another popular Leo 'horror' creation, still to be found on the rampage today, was that scourge of civilized humanity known as Sweeny Toddler. This baby-brat harbinger of infant mischief, and his impossibly twee and over-protective mumsy, was guaranteed to put the fear of parenthood in the most broody of newly-weds. Tom (smelly sock) Paterson eventually adopted him during his Shiver & Shake phase and nurtured his goo-goo-gruesomeness in true Baxendalish style; the marginal cannibalistic squelchy things

being an added spooky treat in the Mad magazine tradition of Arrogones between-panel antics. The strong 'bad smell' influence of Leo is especially evident in Tom's ghoulishly eccentric, many-tentacled, treatment of 'Strange Hill' and can still be seen today in the juvenile cheekiness of 'Calamity James' (a close cousin to Sweeny). Mike Brown, of 'Wiz war' fame, is another artist whose loose style is strikingly similar to the brashly spontaneous Baxendale brand.

With 'Mervyn's Monsters' (Buster 1968) and 'Sam's Spook' (Smash 1970), Leo was artistically treading water until the ectoplasmic explosion that was Monster Fun in 1975. Bob Paynter allowed Leo the freedom to devise eight page (pull-out) mini comics under the general title of The Bad Time Bed Time Book. This innovative series of street urchin adaptations of well-known tales, drawn in a wildly exaggerated graffiti-like style, was to become his comic strip swansong. These puntastic pieces of beastie-ridden whimsy, such as 'Little Miss Stuffit' and 'Dr.Jackal and Mr.Snide', were delightfully irreverent send-ups of traditional

BELOW FROM LEFT, THE NERVS, DARE-A-DAY DAVY, GRIMLY FEENDISH AND SWEENY TODDLER, A QUARTET OF QUEER CREATIONS WITH AN EDGE TO THEM.

fairy stories and horror yarns. In a similar (jugular) vein, the three spooktacular volumes of Leo's 'Willy The Kid' (Duckworth 1976-78) followed. Comic monstrosities abounded including a "Night of The Demon" teacher called Frostbite and a Loch Ness Monster / Dalek hybrid 'macterminating' a flock of furry sporrans! This work successfully consolidated his unparalleled genius for anarchic whimsy. He leaves behind him an influential, multi-styled, legacy of inspired comic lunacy and raspberry-spewing mayhem (a comic tradition which reached a literal apotheosis with Tom Paterson's 'Rasper' for Dandy!)

It must now be apparent to you that the supernatural has been, over the decades, a rich inspirational theme for the artists whose work has been briefly profiled. In conclusion, Ken and Leo were consummate contributors to the spoof spook cause. Together with their artistic heirs, the work they have produced will, no doubt, remain an enduring source of haunted hilarity and artistic inspiration in years to come. My final peek at comic spookdom will examine the work of the artists that followed in the wake of Ken and Leo. I shall also attempt to explain some of the innate fascination we have for this theme, with reference to the usual motley crew of macabre comic characters, and how this relates to everyday life in Britain both past and present. Until then, may your comic 'mediums' continue to be spiritualised ?

TO BE CONTINUED...

SWEENY TODDLER

"...SO THE NAUGHTY BOY HID HIS PAL'S MARBLES! WASN'T THAT WICKED OF HIM?"
SOPPY RUBBISH! ME COULD BE NAUGHTIER THAN THAT! YAWN!
STRETCH!
SPECIALLY FOR SIMPERING SOFTIES.
AND HE'S HORRIBLE! UGH!!
HELLO, FOLKS! I'M GRIMLY FEENDISH!

GOINGS-ON AT THE VICARAGE

In this follow up to "A Boy's Eye View" (see last issue), ***David Slinn*** *continues his recollections of the early days of EAGLE, and how the somewhat extraordinary background to the comic's original creation gradually came to light. Just chance remarks or the odd vague rumour, at first, then from occasional press or radio items and, later, through initial tentative contacts with the world of children's publications.*

This latter development, ultimately leading to an opportunity of learning much of the real story from the inside...

The drastic changes, we irrationally envisaged would be made to *Eagle*'s content, took no account of the practicalities of producing a weekly publication. Let alone, one with nearly half its pages printed in full colour; still involving, in the 1950s, particularly slow and tedious procedures. Consequently, while in mid-May No.5 was avidly being read, in the *Eagle* offices editorial preparation of issues for late-July/early-August, that is No.15 forwards, would already have been well in hand.

Thus, eventually it became clear, the actual explanation of what Dicky Medlock's dad saw in the *Daily Telegraph*, meant our fevered anxieties were entirely uncalled for. This small news item *had* simply stated, a Lancashire vicar had been granted permission by the Bishop of Liverpool to resign the living of St James', Birkdale, in Southport. Thereby, enabling the Reverend Marcus Morris to take up a full-time appointment with the Hulton Press – as editor of the boys' paper he'd created.

Of course, by the time these facts emerged, the imagined interference hadn't materialised anyway: because without the clergyman there'd have been no *Eagle* in the first place. There was, however, an equally bizarre twist still to come. The previously puzzling *nom de plume*, Chad Varah, attributed to the serial 'Plot Against the World', was not only the author's real name – but he was a Reverend too.

The two men initially became acquainted through Marcus Morris's earlier foray into publishing. Soon after his arrival in 1945, the new incumbent set about turning the St James' parish newsletter into a small monthly magazine. The project caught the mood of the times and, within twelve months or so, was re-named *The Anvil*, 'A New Magazine for Southport People'. The declared editorial strategy, was "to hammer out" important issues of the day.

Although severely hampered by the post-war paper restrictions, gradually the title attracted a

(ABOVE TOP:) 'CHAPLAIN DAN DARE OF THE INTERPLANET PATROL', EVOLVED FROM FRANK HAMPSON'S EARLIER CREATION, 'LEX CHRISTIAN' A LONDON EAST END PARSON (BELOW:) A FELLOW TRAVELLER. IN THIS EPISODE OF 'THE GREAT ADVENTURER', FRANK HAMPSON BEGINS THE STORY OF SAUL OF TARSUS ON HIS LONG JOURNEY TO BECOMING ST PAUL

(BELOW:) ALL THREE OF THESE STRIP FEATURES, CREATED FOR THE EARLY EAGLE DUMMIES BY NORMAN THELWELL, J WALKDEN FISHER AND E C JENNINGS, FELL BY THE WAYSIDE

Chaplain
DAN DARE
of the INTER-PLANET PATROL
THE GREAT ADVENTURER
Pod Milligan
HIAWATHA
from the story by
H.W. LONGFELLOW
Retold and Illustrated
ERNIE
ALWAYS UNLUCKY
COME HERE, AUGUSTUS
IF I CAN ONLY GET THIS IDEA INTO YOUR SILLY BRAIN, WELL BE RICH!
GOOD BOY, GUSSIE, ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS JUMP THRO' THIS HOOP, SEE?
IT'S VERY EASY — NOW JUST TRY IT ONCE
HERE! HAVE A GOOD LOOK AT IT, GUS, THERE'S A GOOD DOG

wider readership and, by the end of 1947, its circulation had reached the upper quota of 2,500. Even so, that still wasn't enough to even make it pay for itself. Determined to both liven up the magazine and try to broaden the scope of its sales, Marcus anxiously sought advice from a local journalist. This led to a suggestion that he might do well to approach a young artist, who was about to complete his course at Southport College of Art.

The outcome was, Frank Hampson who had a wife and baby son to support, found himself with a welcome source of freelance work.

In turn, Marcus discovered an enthusiastic and invaluable recruit to help advance *The Anvil*'s future prospects. During his efforts to extend the reach of the title in Lancashire, he had also met up with the editor of the Blackburn diocesan magazine, *The Crosier*, the Reverend Chad Varah. Both men shared the belief that there was real potential for improving, through popular journalism, the means of communicating the Christian message.

In April 1948, a conference of diocesan editors took place at Whalley Abbey. Where, following three days of discussion, a society called 'Interim' was formed with the idea of syndicating articles and features amongst the delegates' own parish magazines and other church periodicals. The duties of secretary of 'Interim' were taken on by Chad Varah. Who soon discovered, for the scheme to appear viable, he'd often end up writing many of the articles himself, on a wide range of subjects and under various pseudonyms.

Despite these early setbacks, there were encouraging signs of progress when, six months later, at a gathering of prominent clergy and lay people in London, the Society for Christian Publicity came into being. It fell to Marcus to deliver the opening address, in which there was the briefest reference to the possibility of publishing "...a strip-cartoon magazine for children..."

Nº 1 OF A SUPER ★ NEW ★ CARTOON PAPER
EAGLE 4d
MEET YOUR NEW FAVOURITES
DAN DARE
OF THE INTERPLANET PATROL
ERNIE
SECRET CITY
THE GREAT ADVENTURER
JOE
★ AND MANY MORE INSIDE ★
MAKE SURE OF YOUR COPY — PLACE A REGULAR ORDER NOW

(ABOVE:) ONLY 'THE GREAT ADVENTURER' SURVIVED, WITH ITS ORIGINAL TITLE AND STORYLINE INTACT, FROM THIS LINE-UP ON THE COVER OF THE EAGLE DUMMY
(BELOW:) JIMMY SWIFT TOOK ON A NEW IDENTITY AS ROB CONWAY, BUT WAS STILL CAUGHT UP IN THE SEARCH FOR THE 'SECRET CITY', DRAWN BY FRANK HAMPSON

Marcus had become increasingly disturbed by the proliferation of American crime and horror comics that were being shipped, almost literally, in huge quantities across the Atlantic as ballast on cargo freighters. It seemed clear to him that, however unsuitable the contents, these were being bought by youngsters whose appetite for exciting reading wasn't being adequately catered for elsewhere.

In his *Anvil* editorial, for February 1949, Marcus broached the idea of a Christian children's comic and gave a strong hint the Society for Christian Publicity already had such a project in preparation. A journalist who worked for the Sunday *Empire News* in Manchester, but resided in Southport, picked up on this and decided to follow it up. He found little difficulty in persuading Marcus to collaborate in writing a feature article, which they then sold to the *Sunday Dispatch*.

It appeared on 13 February 1949, under the headline 'Comics that take horror into the Nursery'. After, vividly describing the garishly-coloured comic books, depicting stories of armed robbery, vice, casual brutality and, not infrequently, death in gruesome or grotesque circumstances; the article then outlined the more wholesome alternative Marcus believed was urgently needed. The immediate response was such, that letters arrived at the vicarage from all over the country with enquiries as to when and where this Christian comic would be available. To some extent, the clergyman had been hoist by his own petard. With the monthly magazine still struggling to make ends meet, contemplating producing any kind of children's periodical was entirely out of the question.

That spring two quite separate, though ultimately significant, events occurred. First, Chad Varah left Blackburn to move to a London parish, St John with St Paul at Clapham Junction. In doing so, he handed over the administration of 'Interim' to Marcus who, sensing this was an >

A PUZZLE SOLVED?

In the spring of 2008, there turned up amongst the lots at Dominic Book Auctions in Cirencester, a ten-year run of the 1950s *Eagle*. To the astonishment of the – somewhat fortuitous – successful bidder, the London Cartoon Museum, concealed in the collection was a copy of the second *Eagle* dummy, originally created during October 1949. Apparently left undisturbed, or certainly its significance never realised by anyone who may previously have chanced upon it.

The cover of this vital piece of comic history, provides a partial answer to the puzzle of the *Radio Times* advertisements referred to in "A Boy's Eye View" in *Crikey!* 14. What still remains a mystery, however, is why this second dummy 'Dan Dare' front page, was chosen as reference rather than the real cover of *Eagle* No.1. Still more intriguing – given the quality of the Eagle itself – is how the poorly executed, hand-drawn representation came to be used in the first place, let alone in a further series of advertisements.

appropriate moment to give a little boost to both 'Interim' and the Society for Christian Publicity, decided to send out a mailing to all the clergy involved.

Instead of the usual typed sheet, he thought a properly designed and printed brochure would more likely have the required impact. On somebody's recommendation, he was put in touch with a young typographer in London, Ruari McLean. After a somewhat cautious first meeting, one afternoon at Euston Station, the two men began a friendship that was to play an important part in both their lives.

With Frank now regularly contributing illustrations, cartoons and even providing the artwork for some trade advertisements, while *The Anvil*'s readership continued to flourish and its reputation steadily rise, unfortunately, so month-by-month did the accumulated debts.

Nevertheless, the strength and unanimity of the public's reaction to the *Sunday Dispatch* article, caused him to re-evaluate the idea of a strip cartoon being the means of delivering the message. Frank was especially keen on exploring the proposition and, together, they created a primarily adult newspaper strip involving the adventures of Lex Christian, a tough fighting parson based in a parish in the East End of London.

Their contact at the *Empire News* arranged for them to go and see the paper's editor, Terence Horsley. Although impressed with the batch of specimen strips, particularly Frank Hampson's handling of the required treatment; he felt they needed to do a little more work on it. Once this was done, he suggested, they should come and see him again. Before they could, fate intervened. On April 24th, Terence Horsley was killed in a gliding accident.

However, this tragedy was a turning point. Marcus became convinced that they ought to abandon the idea of a Sunday newspaper strip, and concentrate their efforts on a children's paper consisting mainly of strip features. Frank's reaction was enthusiastic and, from the beginning of May, although adding to the pressures of producing *The Anvil*, they worked on stories and ideas that might be developed into illustrated features.

Lex Christian was first turned into a flying padre then, after a short while, became a services chaplain whose adventures would take him out into space. Having decided to send the character to Venus, doubts began to creep in about the suitability of his name. Eventually Frank's wife, Dorothy, suggested Dan Dare ... and a legend was born. Similarly, by trial and error, other ideas evolved. Including the story of St Paul's adventurous life, which easily lent itself to being serialised. While Frank researched the historical background, Marcus worked on a preliminary outline.

The Anvil's publishing schedule, of necessity, took priority but the increased monthly workload soon took its toll. Harold Johns, a former fellow student with whom Frank had formed a working partnership, was brought in to assist in a general capacity. He helped with the 'Dan Dare' pages and produced additional strips for possible inclusion. Later, Harold also introduced J Walkden Fisher who worked as a designer with a toy firm. As the dummy gradually took shape, there was a good deal of discussion over what the magazine should be called.

The chosen title came about when Dorothy Hampson found her gaze drawn to the carved eagle, with its open wings supporting the bible, on the church lectern. It appeared, in a way, to be helping to "spread the word". Once the *Eagle* dummy was completed, three copies were photo-printed and the appropriate pages then finished in watercolours.

The lead feature, 'Chaplain Dan Dare of the Interplanet Patrol', appeared in colour over two pages, with another major strip 'Secret City' given the same treatment. Also in colour, a couple of half-page humorous strips: 'Joe from Strawberry Farm' and 'Ernie, Always Lucky'. On the other pages were Walkden Fisher's 'World of Wonders'; text stories; railway and model features; competitions and an Editor's Letter. The story of St Paul, titled 'The Great Adventurer', went on the back page in colour.

In the early summer, Marcus began to sound out those who

might possibly help find a Church publisher willing to take the project on. However, most found the proposals too ambitious. He next tried Wills & Hepworth, publishers of 'Ladybird' children's books, to be met with much the same response. He wrote to Edward Hulton at the Hulton Press, in July, but got no reply. Soon after, a real breakthrough came with George Newnes, publishers of *Woman's Own*. Following an optimistic first interview and subsequent correspondence, they then began to express doubts about paper supplies and decided more time was needed to consider the matter. It was to be late September before they finally said no.

Although approaches often foundered at the first hurdle, a disappointing visit to J. Arthur Rank was instrumental in pointing him in the direction of The Amalgamated Press, publishers of *Film Fun*, *Radio Fun*, *Knock-Out* and *The Champion*. The resulting meeting with Montague Haydon, Editorial Director of the juvenile periodicals, was a somewhat guarded affair. Perhaps not least, because earlier that year AP had acquired a couple of obscure comics from a small Cheshire publisher – possibly to obtain the existing titles' paper quota – and added the re-furbished, *The Comet* and *Sun*, to their range of juvenile titles in the very market the clergyman aimed to launch his new children's paper.

Montague Haydon agreed to examine the proposal, but in September returned the *Eagle* dummy to Birkdale, with a note regretting that, while "bright and good", it wasn't different enough from their own established weekly comics. Undeterred, Marcus persisted with writing letters, making overnight trips to London and calling at publishers' offices on the off-chance someone or something might provide a way forward. The *Boy's Own Paper* and *Girl's Own Paper* publishers, Lutterworth Press, though keen to take the project on, could see no way of overcoming the obstacles presented by paper rationing.

In October 1949, his thoughts suddenly returned to the Hulton Press and the unanswered letter. On the next visit to London, Marcus determinedly set off down Fleet Street and headed for the offices of *Picture Post* in Shoe Lane. An Assistant General Manager, Ronnie Dickenson, was assigned to see the unexpected visitor who explained – for the umpteenth time – how the venture had come into being, and hesitantly handed over a copy of the *Eagle* dummy. In turn, this was taken to John Pearce and Maxwell Raison, the General Managers, to be looked at. Encouragingly, Marcus was then invited to see them. Though slightly puzzled by the clergyman, they asked if the dummy could be left with them for a few days, so his proposition might be properly examined and assessed.

After so many previous disappointments, the return journey to Birkdale possibly seemed no different from all the others. There were the Sunday services to prepare for, along with an issue of *The Anvil* to be edited and, more worryingly, add still further to his overdraft. Life was back to normal.

Ten days after the visit to the Hulton Press, on 10th October, a telegram suddenly arrived at the vicarage: 'DEFINITELY INTERESTED STOP DO NOT APPROACH ANY OTHER PUBLISHER STOP'

A few days after the telegram was received, Marcus travelled down for >

(BELOW LEFT.) 'ALBERT HALL', WRITTEN AND ILLUSTRATED BY IONICUS, WHO SOMEHOW NEVER QUITE MADE IT INTO EAGLE NO.1
(BELOW RIGHT.) FRANK HAMPSON'S REDRAWN COVER FOR 'DAN DARE: PILOT OF THE FUTURE' IN EAGLE NO.2. THIS REPLACED THE ARTWORK ORIGINALLY PREPARED FOR THE SECOND EAGLE DUMMY (SEE 'A PUZZLE SOLVED?' OPPOSITE)

ALBERT HALL
The Office Boy
Story & Pictures by IONICUS
HURRY! YOU MUSTN'T BE LATE FOR YOUR FIRST DAY AT THE OFFICE
BUS STOP
CITY BUS!
YOU WILL HAVE THE MOST IMPORTANT JOB IN THIS OFFICE THIS IS YOUR DESK
CUPS AND SAUCERS?
YES, IF MR. MOFFATT DOESN'T GET A GOOD CUP OF TEA HE'S VERY BAD TEMPERED HE'S SACKED TEN BOYS THIS YEAR BECAUSE THEY MADE SUCH POOR TEA. SO IT'S UP TO YOU, ALBERT HALL!
GOSH! I'VE NEVER MADE TEA IN ALL MY LIFE
IF I SPOIL THIS TEA I'LL GET A WEEK'S NOTICE ... I KNOW!
PLEASE MUM, TELL ME HOW TO MAKE A GOOD CUP OF TEA
WELL LISTEN CAREFULLY I'LL WARM THE POT
COME IN!
THAT'S THE BEST CUP OF TEA I'VE EVER HAD IN THIS PLACE EXCELLENT! NOW TAKE THIS CAKE TO THE STATION AND GIVE IT TO MR. SMITH A TALL MAN WITH A HEAVY BLACK MOUSTACHE
STATION

EAGLE – THE NEW NATIONAL STRIP CARTOON WEEKLY
EAGLE
EVERY FRIDAY
DAN DARE
PILOT OF THE FUTURE
Dan Dare and Digby, his batman, are driving to Space Fleet HQ in answer to an urgent call from the Controller
I WONDER IF ANYTHING HAS HAPPENED TO THE "SPACEHAWK" YET?
WELL, I'LL SOON KNOW— PASS THE CHAG NUT AND WAIT FOR ME, DIG.
HOWDY SMITH WHERE'S THE CONTROLLER?
HE'S IN THE SPACE VIEWER ROOM SIR!
PHEW! MAKING A BIG EFFORT TO KEEP IN TOUCH WITH THE "KINGFISHER" UP THERE
JUST GOT HERE IN THE NICK OF TIME!
GOOD—SWITCH IT THROUGH ON TO THE SCREEN
AH, THERE YOU ARE, DAN— THIS IS IT! THE "KING" CONFIRMS JUST ENTERED THE AREA WHERE THE ORION AND "ARGONAUT" VANISHED—

(LEFT): LEARIE CONSTANTINE, A SAFE PAIR OF HANDS

(BELOW:) ALL HANDS ON DECK, WITH JOHN RYAN'S 'CAPTAIN PUGWASH'
(CENTRE·) DAD MAY BE REQUIRED TO GIVE A HAND HERE; WHILE DENIS ALFORD DRAWS ANOTHER LANCASHIRE SPORTING HERO
(BOTTOM:) NORMAN THELWELL'S 'CHICKO', OFF TO BUY HIS COPY OF EAGLE .

CAPTAIN PUGWASH
THE STORY OF A BAD BUCCANEER & OF THE MANY STICKY ENDS WHICH NEARLY BEFELL HIM
MAKING YOUR OWN MODEL RACING CAR
SPORTING PERSONALITIES
STANLEY MORTENSEN
CHICKO

further interviews with the Hulton management team. During these early discussions he learnt the dummy had so impressed Tom Hopkinson, the editor of *Picture Post*, that he straightaway advised John Pearce and Maxwell Raison: "Hire all the people who produced it and start publishing it as soon as possible."

When the pair queried the notion of a clergyman abandoning his parish to become an editor, the respected Fleet Street journalist suggested they should simply hire a couple of curates to take the church services. Marcus had, at long last, discovered someone who'd championed his cause.

First though, to ensure the Hulton Press weren't mistaken in their appraisal, he was sent back to Southport with instructions to produce four more dummies. Although this initially caused something of a flap, very quickly those already associated with *The Anvil* rallied round.

Just finishing a degree course at Liverpool School of Art, was a young Norman Thelwell. Frank went to see him, and he agreed to help with producing the artwork requirements. He created a full-page colour strip for the dummy, 'Pop Milligan', about a family of barge people living on a Liverpool canal. Another contributor was Jos Armitage, who signed his work 'Ionicus'; his earlier efforts on 'Joe from Strawberry Farm' discarded, he came up with 'Albert Hall' the exploits of an office boy. Walkden Fisher retold the story of 'Hiawatha' and, along with Harold Johns, generally helped Frank complete the major strip features.

Ruari McLean was advising Marcus on layout and typography, and came up with the design for the front cover, incorporating a red panel with '*The Eagle*' in white lettering. The cover feature was now titled, *Dan Dare: Pilot of the Future*, the strip continuing on page 2; the 'Secret City' story also had a change of title, to Rob Conway; the bible story, *The Great Adventurer*, now appeared on the final two colour pages. Editorial pages, text stories and other features, as previously, made up the balance of the content.

As it turned out, only three dummies were completed, but they were enough to convince the senior managers it was safe to go ahead. At the beginning of November, Marcus, Frank and the other main participants were taken onto the Hulton Press payroll. The company also agreed to settle the most pressing of Marcus's debts though, perhaps as a safeguard, at this stage there was no question of him resigning his living in Birkdale. His new life was shared between five days working in London and the weekends administering to his flock.

In Southport, a converted bakery was rented in Botanic Road, Churchtown, as a studio for Frank, Harold and the other artists. An example of just how different things were sixty years ago: the studio had no telephone. However, as the workload increased The Bakehouse began to accommodate the newcomers who answered the various advertisements Marcus placed in the *Daily Telegraph* and *Advertisers Weekly*. An early reply came from an Isle of Man vicar's daughter, Jocelyn Thomas; her portfolio seemed especially promising and both men agreed to take her on straightaway. Joan Porter, already in Southport, joined as a general assistant; she photographed the models, mainly built by Walkden Fisher, and undertook much of the research work on the strips.

Meanwhile, settling in at 43-44 Shoe Lane, Marcus was faced with task of finding other writers and artists to produce further weekly features. Chad Varah's earlier move south from Blackburn, proved to be a blessing in disguise, for he was now on hand to sift through the submissions coming in from literary agents. In addition, he had the task of preparing his own manuscript for serialisation. Marcus experienced one or two problems liaising with artists' agents who, when it came to choosing suitable strip illustrators, had their own ideas regarding what they thought he was looking for.

Frank and his team were to be responsible for the three major strips, a total of four pages of which three were in colour. In fact, outside those mentioned, very little from the original dummies survived. Norman Thelwell ended up with just a three-panel strip, *Chicko*, while 'Ionicus' – an experienced and accomplished illustrator – failed to get even that.

A commercial artist working in

(ABOVE) 'PROFESSOR BRITTAIN EXPLAINS', SAW EAGLE RAPIDLY GAIN THE APPROVAL OF SCIENCE TEACHERS
(BELOW) 'THE ADVENTURES OF P.C.49', WAS BASED ON ALAN STRANKS' ALREADY POPULAR RADIO SERIES

Southport, J Spencer Croft, was invited to write and illustrate a series of scientific articles, which became: *Professor Brittain Explains*. While Marcus arranged for the West Indian cricketer Learie Constantine, who he'd earlier interviewed for *The Anvil*, to collaborate in the preparation of an instructional coaching strip, which was to be drawn by Denis Alford.

The Adventures of P.C.49
YOU SEAT FOR ME SIR?
IT'S ABOUT YOUR APPLICATION FOR DUTY AS PLAIN CLOTHES AIDE
DO I GET THE CHANCE CHIEF?
I'M AFRAID NOT FORTYNINE YOU'D NEVER DO FOR UNDER COVER WORK THERE'S COPPER WRITTEN ALL OVER YOU
PUTTING YOU IN PLAIN CLOTHES WOULD BE LIKE SENDING OUT THE POLICE BAND IN FULL REGALIA
ANY LUCK ARCHIE?
NO STILL A BEAT BASHER ALL FEET AND NO BRAINS
BETTER GET DOWN TO THE SCHOOL CROSSING CONSTABLE IT'S 9 A.M.
MORNING CHIEF
HELLO THERE FORTYNINE
MORNING ARCHIE BOY
IF WHAT THE CHIEF SAYS IS TRUE JIMMY BOY IT LOOKS LIKE I'M CONDEMNED TO UNIFORM FOR LIFE
DON'T LET IT GET YOU DOWN PAL YOU'LL SHOW 'EM ONE OF THESE DAYS
WHAT THE BLAZES?
LOOK OUT JIMMY!
IS HE BADLY HURT?
I GOT THE CAR NUMBER BXO 79
HE'S STILL BREATHING BXO 79 DON'T WORRY JIMMY I'LL GET THOSE MURDEROUS SWINE IF IT'S THE LAST THING I DO

Back in London, assistant art-master at Harrow, John Ryan, after a shaky first encounter found he and Marcus sort of agreed what was required, and came up with *Captain Pugwash*. An approach to Alan Stranks resulted in Hultons securing the publishing rights to the radio series, *The Adventures of P.C.49*, the writer himself finding the artist, Strom Gould.

After a lot of market research, discussion and negotiation, Wall's Ice Cream agreed to sponsor a full-page weekly adventure series in colour. Initially, part of the deal was that Frank Hampson should illustrate the feature. Marcus realised the importance of this innovation, for both the space and the fees for the artwork would be paid for by the advertiser. Even so, this extra burden would fall on an already overworked studio, so additional artists were sought.

Greta Tomlinson, fresh from the Slade Art School, arrived in the February; quickly to be followed by a Canadian, Bruce Cornwell, who'd some studio experience; and then, Terry Maloney, again an e s t a b l i s h e d professional artist. Another student from Southport College of Art, Eric Eden, was to join a little later in the year.

Frank was asked to design the title logo for the magazine and came up with the distinctive, mainly black-and-white, image of a flying eagle, which could easily be reproduced as required in various sizes. This work was done in collaboration with the Curwen Press who Hultons used for their design work; in this instance, the title lettering to be positioned with the eagle printed in black and gold. The girl typographer assigned to the job made such a poor fist of it, that Marcus felt he'd no option but to ask Ruari McLean if he could have a go at providing something more inspiring.

As Ruari began to sketch ideas on the back of an envelope, it jogged his memory of the existence of a typeface called "Tempest", designed by the German typographer, Berthold Wolpe. The curves which ended the crossbars in E and L seemed to reflect the shape of eagles' wings. As the designer was now living in London, he was commissioned to draw the word EAGLE in these letters. A possible disaster averted, Ruari found himself hired as typographical adviser to *Eagle*.

Berthold Wolpe was the senior art editor at the book publishers Fabers and, in the course of his work, often encouraged young artists and designers to seek out other opportunities. This led to him sending a particularly attractive illustrator, in her early-twenties, to the offices of the Hulton Press with an appointment to see the Reverend Marcus Morris.

The clergyman courteously explained to her, that he was recruiting artists to join a team working with Frank Hampson on a number of strips ranging from space adventures to bible stories. It would be necessary to work from Hampson's roughs and immerse herself in his style, so that she could reproduce it exactly. The job, of course, involved going to live in Southport. He offered her a salary of around £1,000 a year – which, then, was beyond the dreams of most fledgling illustrators.

What he didn't know, was that she had not long escaped from the environs of Liverpool in a bid to make her way in the world. The thought of going back filled her with despondency. Moreover, after having mastered the Frank Hampson style to perfection, so that she could draw like him in her sleep. What then, if *Eagle* folded its wings, and she could no longer draw like herself? Shirley Hughes, for she it was, reluctantly turned down Marcus's offer.

TO BE CONTINUED...

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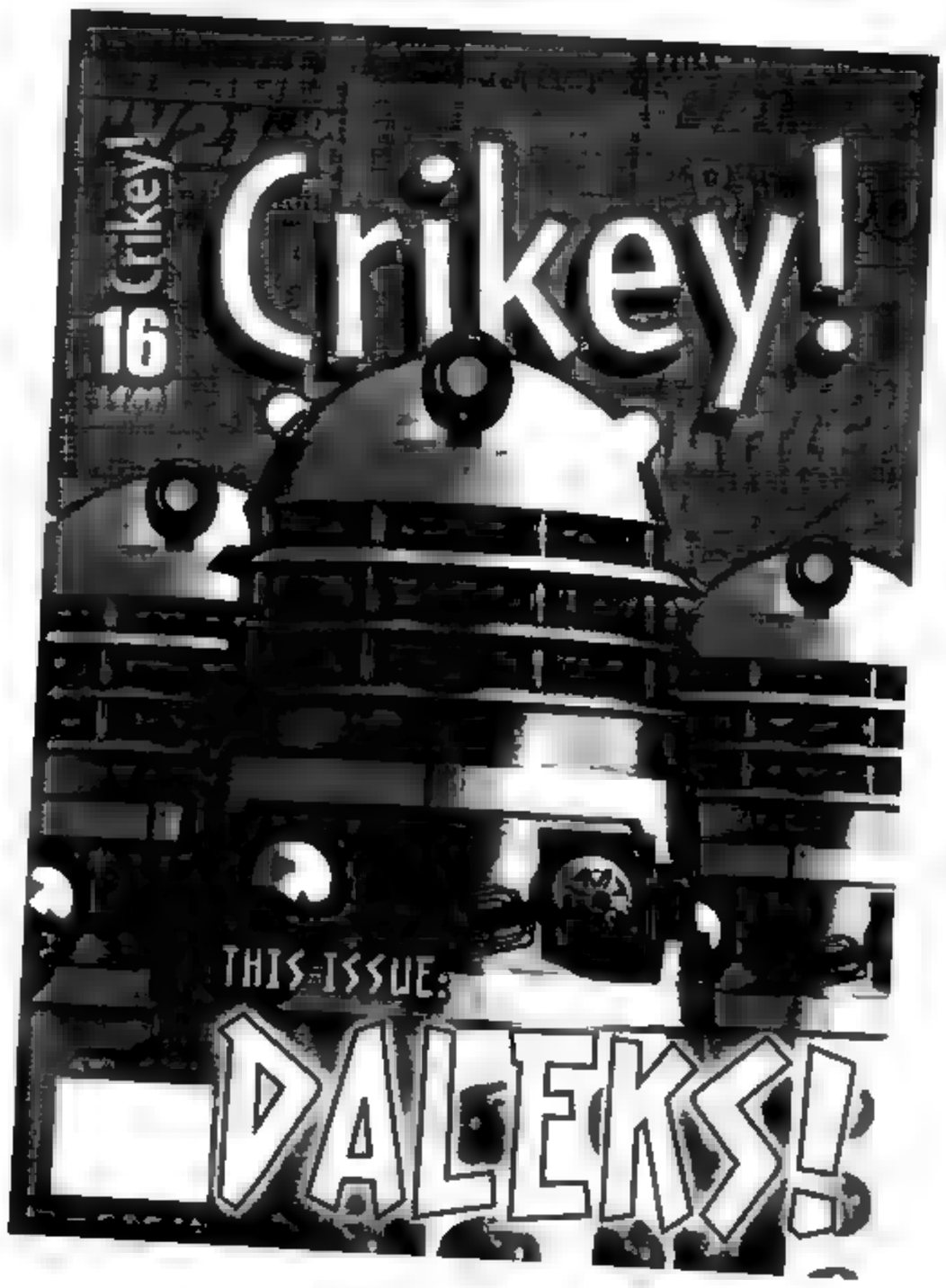

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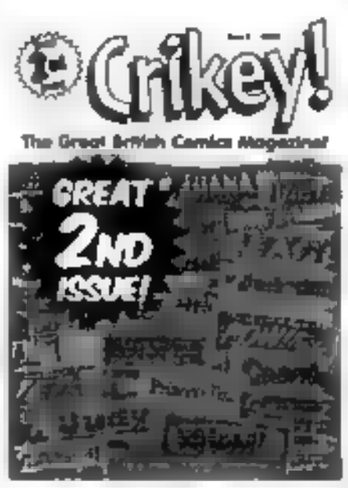

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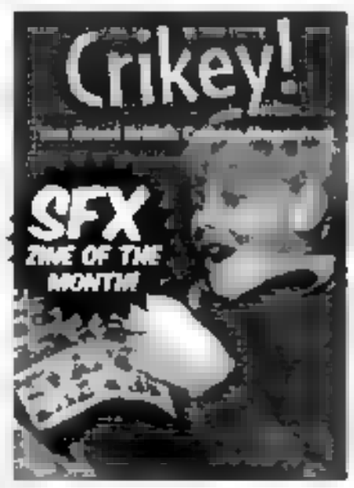
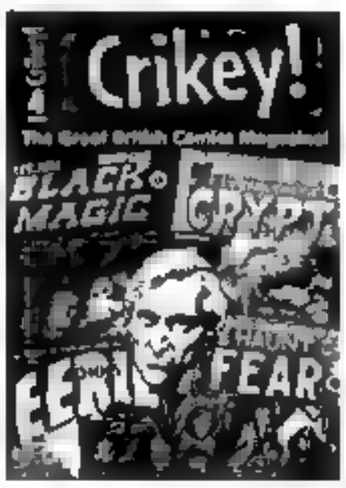
Rocket Comic



1950s space comics
Scream
Dez Skinn interview
Don Lawrence
Adam Eterno



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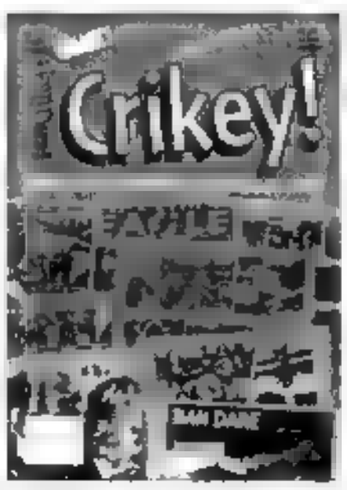
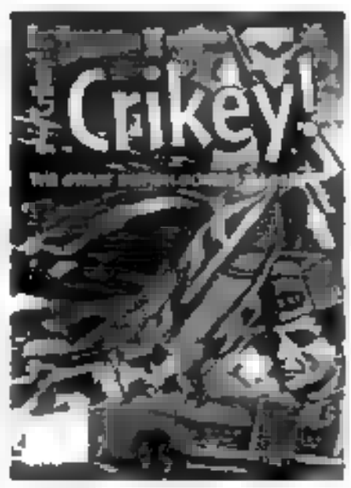
Mike Noble
Spellbound
Countdown



British Super-heroes
Warrior Magazine
Frank Hampson
Dan Dare
Commando Comic

Super Cats & Orphan Brats
Happy Birthday Beano!
Dudley Watkins
Warlord



Garth
Graham Bleathman
Billy Bunter
Thunderbirds
Halo Jones

Charley's War
The Phantom in the UK
The Avengers
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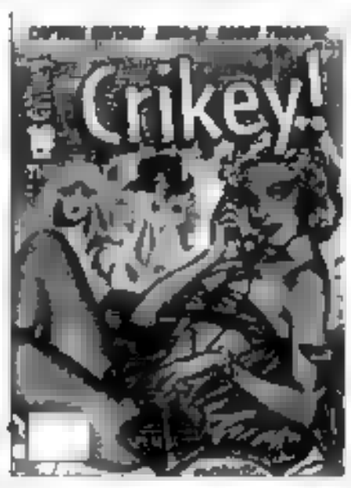

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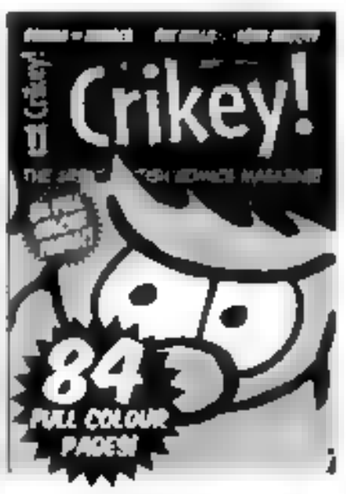
Wicked Wanda
Jane
Captain Britain
Rogue Trooper



Jeff Hawke
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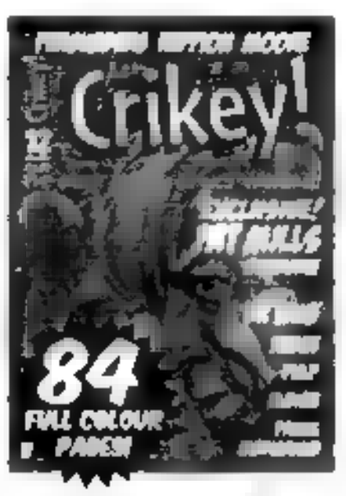
Dez Skinn
Dennis the Menace



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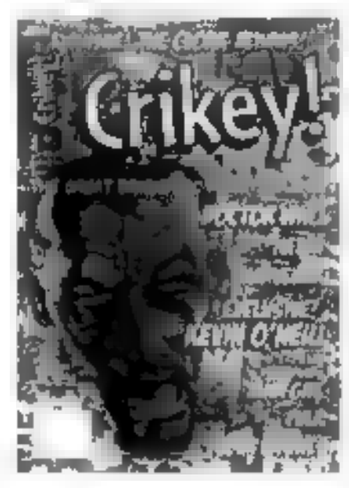


Hatch
Kevin O'Neill
Doctor Who
Tank Girl
British Marvel

Bryan Talbot
Rupert
The Perishers
Eagle
David Slinn

As the 'definitive' Royal Marine Commando, Captain Hercules Hurricane's wartime exploits were nothing if not extraordinary–during his 'time' in the service of his King and his country, he witnessed the retreat from Dunkirk; saw action at El Alamein; fought against the Italians in the push to take Rome; sweated in Burma; and waded ashore during the D Day landings. Crikey! *Sent* Stephen Hooker *to get the low-down on one of Britain's most enduring heroes...*

"GREAT BLISTERING BILGES YOU SCURVY SWABS!"

A BRIEF HISTORY OF CAPTAIN HERCULES HURRICANE

I loved the smell of war comics in the morning. Once, I went to a paper shop and, you know, that smell, that cheap, printed paper smell. I didn't find one over priced American, spandex clad, superhero comic worth paying any attention to. But that smell; that smell of UK war comics...it smelt like...*victory*.

War comics, however, were in a tailspin. And, I suspect, publishers were keen to explore other genres, whilst keeping men in conflict as a draw.

Enter the *Valiant*.

A comic book which encompassed: war, comedy, science fiction, western, mystery, thriller, supernatural and adventure in easily accessible weekly chunks. A Smorgasbord or scatter-gun approach? Who knows? It just worked.

I missed the birth of the *Valiant*, 6 October 1962, published, as it was, eight days before I was born. I would discover its appeal in the late 1960s and early 1970s, as my reading tastes developed and broadened. The *Valiant* would go on to leave an indelible mark on my comic reading soul.

Without a doubt the star of the *Valiant*, to my unbiased mind, in his wartime exploits, taking the fight (possibly to the sound of a ringside bell) to the enemy, was one Royal Marine Commando. The relentless, the built like a brick outhouse (fanfare if you please) Captain Hercules Hurricane.

True, by the mid 1970s, Captain Hurricane's participation in WW2 was more slap-stick than most of his contemporaries, like Battler Britton, whose theatre of war was grimmer and, in comparison, more stolid. Captain Hurricane's contorted war face and real need for anger management courses (no doubt like those advertised in the Guardian newspaper), had a certain something that made reading his war torn adventures totally habitual. Then again, as an only child, and minus a father, I was prone to take my father-figures where I could read them.

Part of Captain Hurricane's charisma was his sea-faring vocabulary, with which he assaulted friends, allies and the enemy alike. Hurricane >

(BELOW): THE CAPTAIN DISCOVERS THAT MAGGOT HAS FORGOTTEN TO CUT HIS BREAD INTO SOLDIERS
ART BY R CHARLES ROYLANCE

dispensed such worldly wise statements such as: "Great Blistering barrels o' boiled bloaters!", "Avast there, you sponge-faced swab!", "Split me spinnaker an' polish me portholes with potted paste!" to the equally understandable: "Sink me sideways in a tubful o' tadpoles, I ain't enjoyed myself so much for weeks".

All, whilst on the driest of land.

He was not alone in his quest to duff up every enemy solider he ran into. His faithful sidekick, batman and personal valet, Maggot Malone was at his side throughout. Malone, pint-sized, slight of build, could easily have been the brains of the outfit; often he would have to engineer a situation where Captain Hurricane lost his temper and the red mist descended, to get them both out of a jam. Except, sometimes, Malone's help hindered the Captain's war effort.

In *Valiant*'s 1971 annual, Malone, accused of being unimaginative by Captain Hurricane, takes on a whole German Division with a combine harvester. Which, naturally, sends Hurricane off the deep end, suggesting that Hurricane might have been a bit of a stickler for how the enemy was engaged; fists and sea-faring terminology okay, farming equipment most certainly *verboten*.

Fond of a cup o'char, Malone took his batman status seriously, brews and meals of army issue corned beef for the Captain would appear on a regular basis to keep those fighting fists in tip top condition. Although when Malone tried to get Hurricane to take up yoga, he was met with the Captain's usual short shrift: "Malone, you mutinous little swab!".

In 1st June 1974 issue, when the *Valiant* had assimilated (resistance was, apparently, futile even back then) the *Lion*, Captain Hurricane and Maggot Malone were teamed up with the Steel Commando, a sort of low rent Archie The Robot. Steel Commando's operator, a slacker of the worse kind only seemed to upset the harmonics of the teamwork that Hurricane and Malone had established over the years. The strained relationship did not last long and by August 1974 Captain Hurricane and

(BELOW): VALIANT ANNUAL 1969 COVER ILLUSTRATION BY GEOFF CAMPION

Malone were back to a more readable (seconds away, round three) fisticuffs flying twosome.

As Royal Marine Commandos, Captain Hurricane and Maggot Malone's wartime exploits saw the pair in the 1940 British Expeditionary Force, retreating to Dunkirk; had them stationed at El Alamein in 1942; billeted to Italy for the push to Rome; posted to Burma in 1944 for a brief spell; before becoming heavily involved in the 1944 D Day landings.

Alas, ye landlubbering dogs, all good things come to and end. After 713 issues, Davy Jones locker beckoned, and the *Valiant* took a subordinate role, merged with IPC's full time war comic, *Battle* on 23 October 1976. Ironically, war comics were experiencing something of a brief renascence in the mid 70s; the kibosh that was *2000AD* was still a year away.

But I, you know, digress (but on the upside I am seeking therapy).

Battle soldiered on and *Valiant* disappeared from the logo when *Action* merged with *Battle* on 19 November 1977. And the *Valiant* upped stumps and returned to the pavilion, taking its opening grand batsman Captain Hurricane in for an early bath too.

Damn your eyes, *2000AD*! (and psychosis aversion treatment).

My own perception, for what it's worth, is that some might find Captain Hurricane a difficult character to fully represent in UK comic book history. And that somehow we might need to air-bush out the good Captain's place in that history too, now that we are all Europeans and drive Japanese cars.

It is worth noting though, that Captain Hurricane was a product of his time, set in the context of war, where German, Japanese and Italian soldiers were referred to in a certain way. And context is an important element to understand and grasp before slipping into an easy and simplistic judgemental mode. Please do not be embarrassed by the terminology employed in the pages of Captain Hurricane; that was then and this is now.

Or, as Captain Hercules Hurricane would probably say on the subject: "Blistering bulwarks! Laughed at! Jeered at. Sneered at. All you lily livered swabs take heed, I might be gone but I'm not forgotten!" ●

(ABOVE): VALIANT ANNUAL 1969 REAR COVER ILLUSTRATION BY GEOFF CAMPION
(TOP): STRIP ART BY R CHARLES ROYLANCE

Pat Mills *pays tribute to the outstanding talent of the late 2000AD artist* John Hicklenton *(pictured top right).*

EMBRACING T

THE MONSTER

When I was growing up, I was a huge fan of cartoonists like Ronald Searle, Scarfe, Steadman, Raymond Lowry and Heath. I have always seen Johnny in the same league and it's why I was instantly attracted to his work. He began his career by drawing Nemesis (2000AD) for me and this was followed up by other wonderful explorations of the macabre such as Zombie World (Dark Horse), Judge Dredd and Pandora (2000ad and Megazine) Inspector Ryan (Crisis), Fearteachers (Toxic), Torturer (Extreme) and so much more.

I have always had trouble accepting the verdict of his critics who said they had problems with his storytelling or the reproduction of his work, and I think it's because that is not the real reason. Even when those problems are resolved, I suspect they would still have difficulty with it.

I think it's his intrinsic style that disturbs his critics, no matter what he drew. And in this he is not alone–Kevin O'Neill (Nemesis, Marshal Law, League of Extraordinary Gentlemen) was told that the American Comic Code Authority found his actual drawing unacceptable to them, whatever he drew. Two examples bear this out for Johnny, too. He was commissioned by an advertising agency to draw the teddy bear for Children in Need. It was beautifully depicted, but looked "like the teddy bear had been hurled violently up against a wall." And "There was something about the look in the teddy bear's (one) eye..." Too much realism, perhaps? Too much truth? On another occasion, I asked Johnny and Duke Mighten (Accident Man) to

>

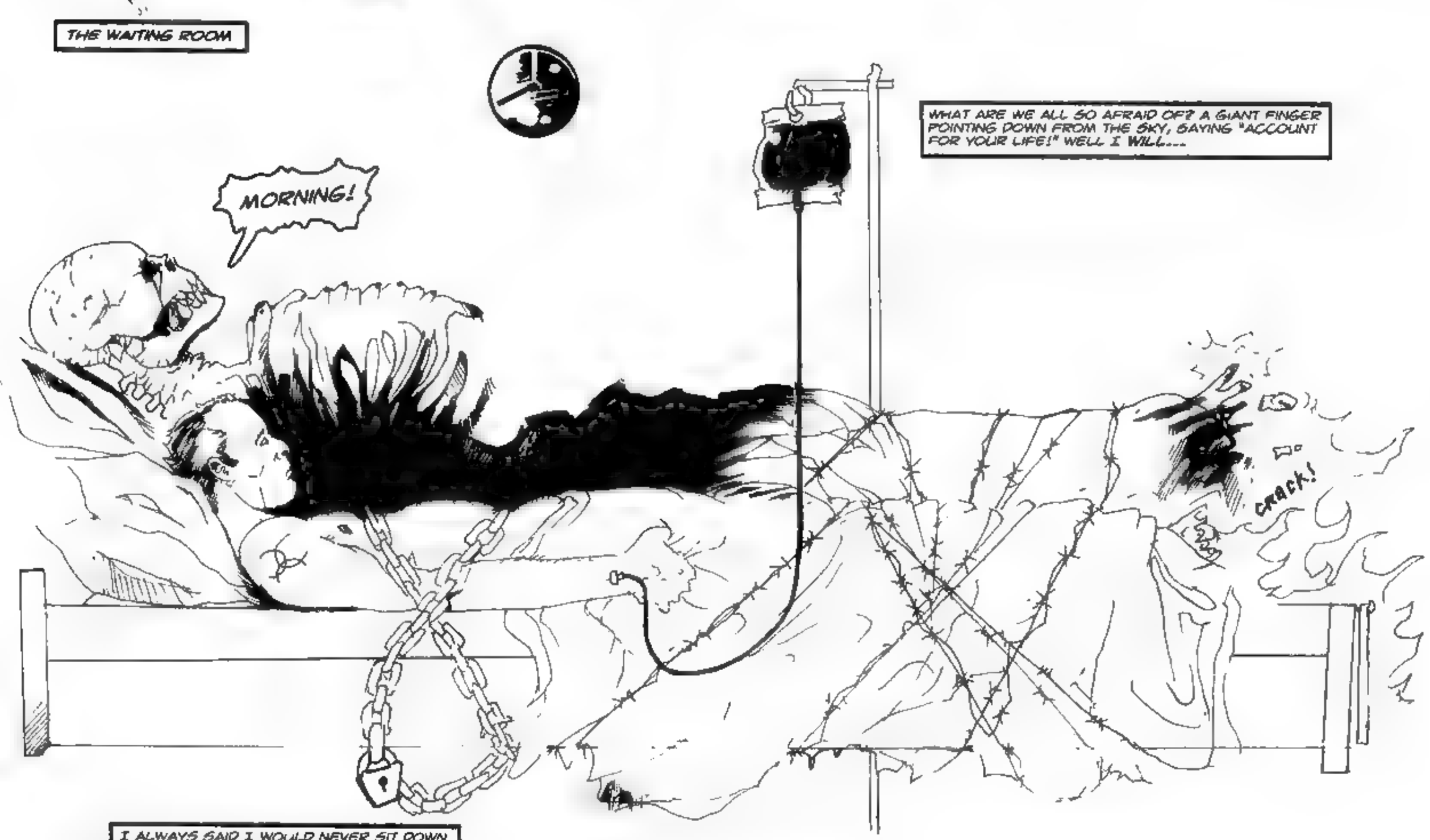
for a girlfriend of mine (Don't ask why - long story). Johnny said it would be impossibly hard for him to draw such a cute creature, but I begged him and he drew it in the end. I thought they both looked great. My friend said she thought Duke's Smurf was really "sweet", but said there was "something about the look in the eye" of the other Smurf that she found "really worrying".

That "look in the eye" is the mark of a wild and great artist who worked in a medium which is becoming increasingly conservative and less rock 'n' roll as time goes by.

And rock 'n' roll was Johnny. He'd been in a band called Deadstock and his art often reflected his musical insights as in the black music scenes in Inspector Ryan. But in Europe, at least, there is still a recognition that comics are part of rock and roll. Thus Johnny and I produced Torturer for Extreme Comics backed by top German band Die Artze. At German signings, Extreme would create the set of a lunatic asylum for us, with girls dressed up as sexy nurses and Johnny and I taking turns to wear straitjackets. On another occasion, we were behind bars on Death Row signing copies as we sat in the electric chair. Johnny loved every moment of it.

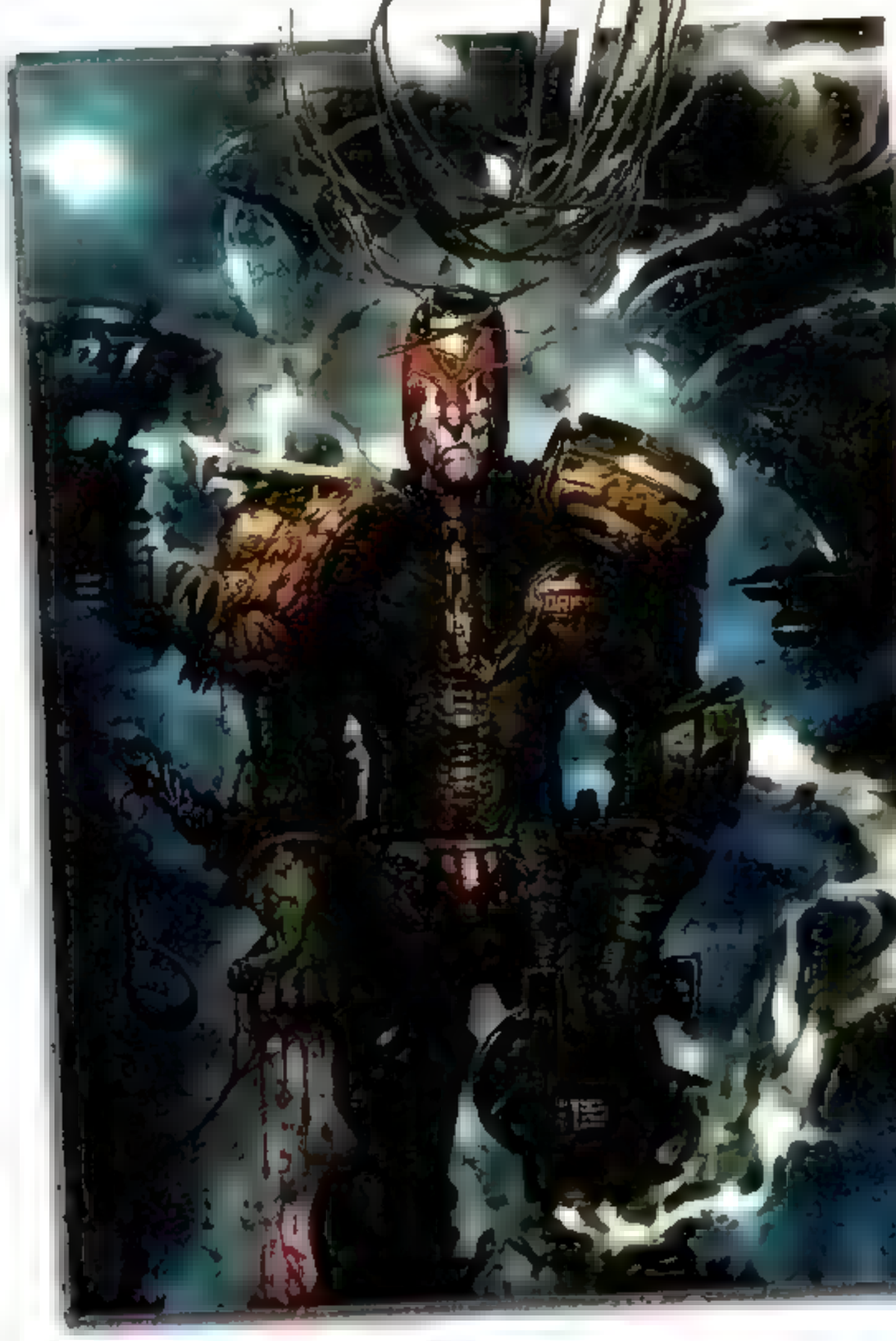
Contrast this with our own country's comic conservatism where one well known comic artist once vehemently criticised me just for just being friends with a rock and roll band (They turned up at a comic convention and offered free love to delighted fanboys. The artist was shocked and appalled). It's why Inspector Ryan from Crisis–a brilliant character created by writer Alan Mitchell–has appeared in graphic novel form in France, Germany and Holland but never Britain. It's why Moebius, France's greatest comic artist, rates Johnny and why there is enormous interest in that country–the world capital of comics–in Johnny's final work. No, Britain was never the best country for a fine artist like Johnny–whom I have described as "The Jimi Hendrix of Comics"–to flourish. I asked an avid comic fan recently which he would prefer: A story well told, but with insipid, uninspiring art or a wild descent into fantasy that required some effort on the part of the reader to absorb. His answer saddened me.

We all knew that Johnny's time was


THE WAITING ROOM
MORNING!
WHAT ARE WE ALL SO AFRAID OF? A GIANT FINGER POINTING DOWN FROM THE SKY, SAYING "ACCOUNT FOR YOUR LIFE!" WELL I WILL....
CRACK!
I ALWAYS SAID I WOULD NEVER SIT DOWN FOR M.S., BUT I HAVE SAT DOWN FOR IT. BUT I WON'T LIE DOWN FOR IT...
I WON'T LIE IN A BED, WITH MY TENDONS CUT, BEING FED THROUGH A STRAW LIKE A BABY.
PEOPLE ALWAYS SAY THAT SUICIDE IS COWARDLY, BUT I THINK IT TAKES BALLS TO KILL YOURSELF. "IF ONLY I HAD THE COURAGE TO BE A COWARD"

short and I was desperate to see him gain the full recognition he deserved in his lifetime. There were so many possibilities in his portfolio of brilliance. There was Acid Sentence–a dark journey into Hell set in a prison. This had opened, prophetically, with a scene featuring the Twin Towers and terrorism and was due to appear on the Cool Beans website around 9/11. It had to be withdrawn because of that tragedy. Bedlam, about grotesque characters from an 18th century lunatic asylum appearing in modern times. Spring Heeled Jack, a story we devised about a Victorian circus. A disabled fairground act is injected with goat's blood and gains the creature's agility to leap across the rooftops. This was suggested by Johnny's struggle with MS and a goats blood serum he took which helped to negate the illness

I would have loved to have seen these stories appear in the only available markets for them: Vertigo (where >



Judge Dredd (left) coloured by Chris Blythe

managing editor Karen Berger had always admired his work) or 2000AD. His fans had loved our Judge Dredd – The Tenth Circle, based on Dante's Inferno, but his critics had also voiced their displeasure, sometimes in an inappropriately abusive manner. Because powerful fine artwork has that reaction. No one is going to write passionate letters about boring insipid art. I kept trying to figure out compromises that might allow any of these stories to go forward, I thought about Johnny drawing my Visible Man (a man whose skin is transparent so his internal organs are visible) or a Judge Dredd I wrote entitled Birthday Boy (a man whose face and body are covered in lit birthday candles, impaled in his flesh). Imagine either of those characters drawn by Johnny! But compromise.is not the answer for such a great artist and how could I ask it of him? Genius has to be accepted on its own terms. Did anyone ask Jimi Hendrix to tone it down a bit? Make it a little more melodious for the cauliflower heads?

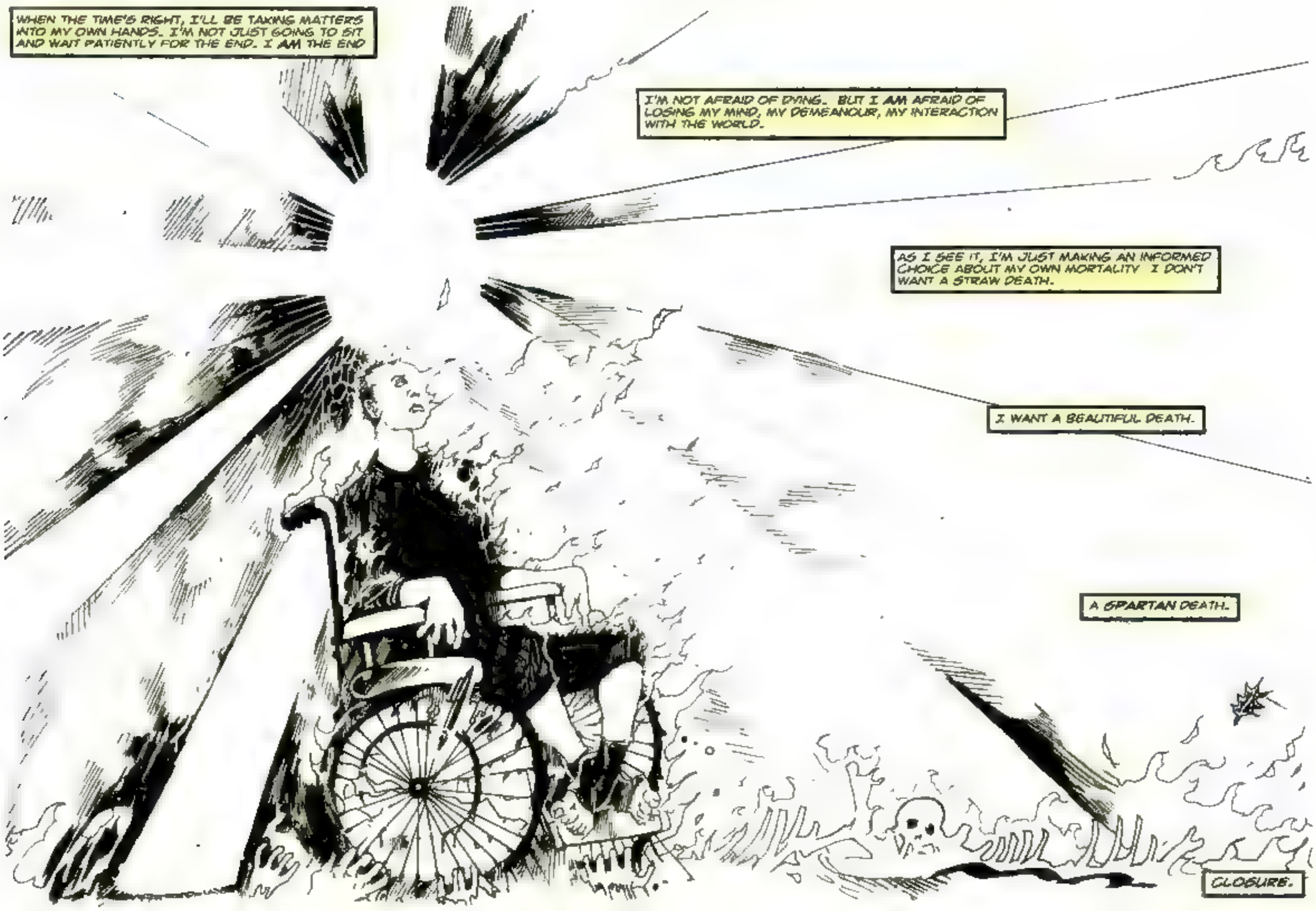
Johnny would have loved to have spent the last year of his life drawing his first love Judge Dredd, but, because of his critics, it was not to be; instead he went further. Much further. He decided to "Embrace the Monster". This is a term author Veronica Crawford uses for overcoming the challenges of disabilities and it accurately describes how Johnny approached his proposed graphic novel Here's Johnny. This was based on the award winning TV documentary of his struggle with MS, his great enemy. He looked forward to defeating it, to "Exorcising the Monster". He told me: "MS has a diagnosis of Johnny. MS, you've met someone you shouldn't have fucked with." There is an element of dark comedy running through this story that makes the tragedy of it bearable. He was a naturally funny guy as the extras on the Here's Johnny DVD confirm. Yet the graphic novel version of Here's Johnny is an incomplete work because, with time running short, he also wanted to produce a work of fantasy - 100 months.

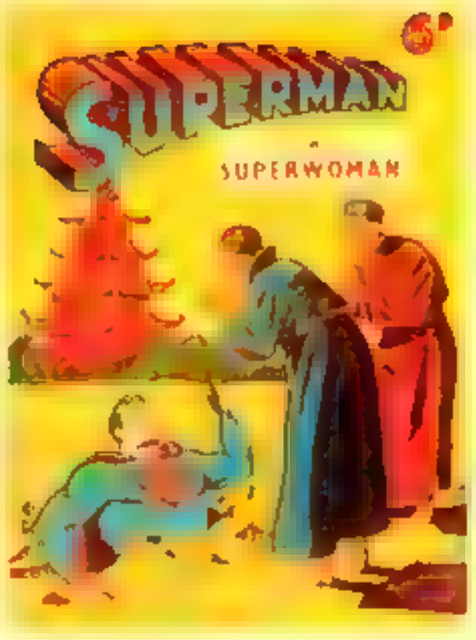
The title comes from a warning that there is only 100 months left before the Earth turns on the creatures who have polluted it and reflects Johnny's own personal race against time. It features a Gaia-like avenging Goddess taking her revenge on humanity–personified as a demonic pig–for polluting the Earth. It's a powerful moving work which he completed just before he passed away. It has a British publisher with various foreign editions also commissioned. It's a masterpiece. There are no compromises. Johnny was finally free of the constraints on him. The reproduction is great, his storytelling - a single image on a single page - is above reproach. And ... there's something about the look in that pig's eye...

"Embracing the Monster" is also a term used in science to describe accepting the unknown. It relates to phenomena that scientists haven't got a clue about but want to sound like they do. It's another way of saying 'X the unknown'. In March this year, in Zurich, Johnny embraced the unknown. His best friend Adam and his devoted partner Claire were with him; he was surrounded by love. There was no Monster present. Because he'd beaten the Monster by ending his life without fear, with great courage and with great humour.

As he said to me once, "We all have to walk through the same door. We have to overcome the English disease. The fear of death. I look forward to meeting you on the other side, Pat. Standing up."

Pat Mills, April 2010


WHEN THE TIME'S RIGHT, I'LL BE TAKING MATTERS INTO MY OWN HANDS. I'M NOT JUST GOING TO SIT AND WAIT PATIENTLY FOR THE END. I AM THE END
I'M NOT AFRAID OF DYING. BUT I AM AFRAID OF LOSING MY MIND, MY DEMEANOUR, MY INTERACTION WITH THE WORLD.
AS I SEE IT, I'M JUST MAKING AN INFORMED CHOICE ABOUT MY OWN MORTALITY I DON'T WANT A STRAW DEATH.
I WANT A BEAUTIFUL DEATH.
A SPARTAN DEATH.
CLOSURE.



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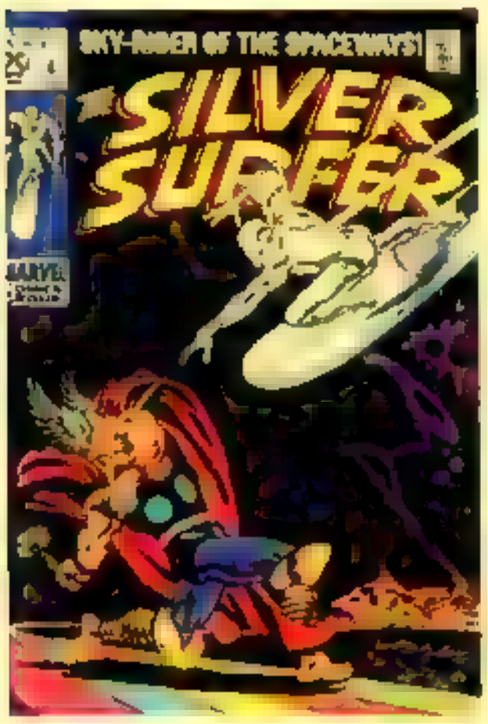

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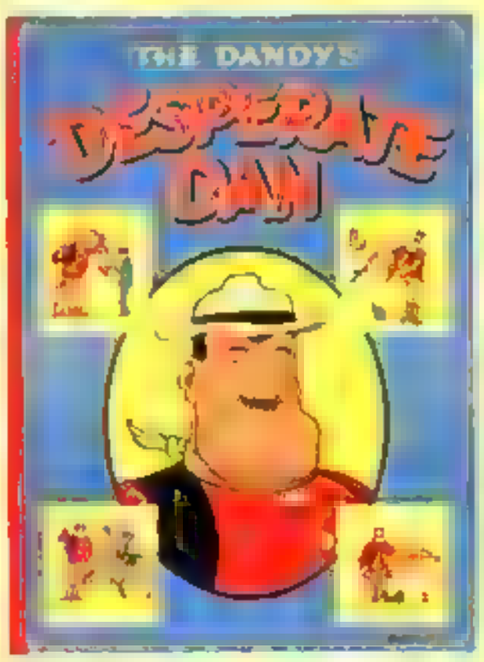
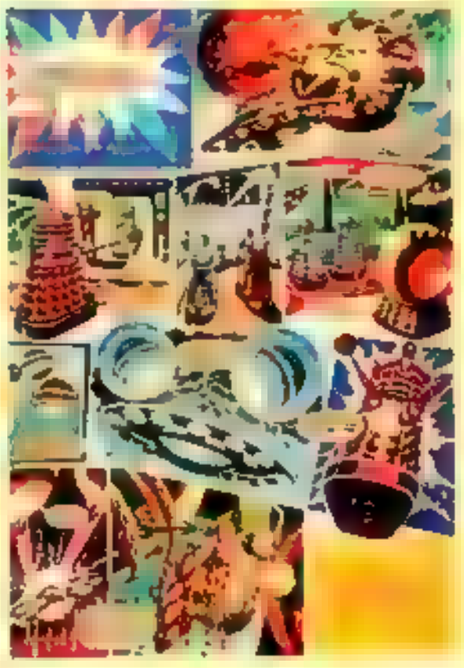




Every issue, **Alex Wiggan** peers at comics...

For those of you who have just walked in...

Born in the West Midlands at the beginning of the 1980s, Alex shunned the limitations imposed by half-day closing on a Wednesday and refused bottles of free school milk, in order to establish himself as an individual.

Keeping this goal firmly in his mind he sought out ways to develop his creativity and soon found himself fixated with comics, where he was able to tap into realities that knew no boundary. Over the years the comics became a constant companion as he worked his way through a succession of uninspiring jobs and as he neared his 3rd decade on Earth he let his love for them guide him towards his new role of informing the world of their magnificence.

Now, with Joe-public facing constant hardships he hopes to relieve the stress of everyday life, and unite fans of comics everywhere!

ALMOST MADE IT?

BY ALEX WIGGAN

Sometimes everything seems to be going your way and the road ahead looks bright, clear and completely free of any major hazards. It seems as if all the struggles of the past will suddenly piece together and bring the achievement that has been so long coming; the reward for all the effort and attempts to get to where you know you must be headed. Then in the blink of an eye it's all over and the realisation it must start once again sinks in, leaving just memories of what once was, but maybe didn't pull together because of reasons outside of your control. For Marvel UK's *Exploits of Spider-man*, which ran for three years during the early 90s, it always seemed to be a comic which was a masthead pointing the way for other titles to follow, emitting a signal to say it was safe to sail uncharted waters because now was the time that the coast was clear. In essence it was another way for Marvel UK to reprint mostly American stories to a market that didn't frequent comic shops, but who might occasionally pick up a comic tucked into a copy of the *Daily Sport*. In reality it was so much more and to a British fan looking for an outlet to quench their reading thirst it was like drinking *Um bongo* amongst a sea of *Kia-Ora*. It was exciting, it was compelling, it felt important and for the small price of £1.99 a month, it was 100 pages that helped fill a readers mind with more knowledge of the exploits of...erm, well Spidey. This being Marvel UK though it wasn't just committed to giving Spider-man junkies a monthly fix, it was also on hand to dispense other aspects of the Marvel universe to continue to establish Marvel comics in the UK as something more addictive.

The first issue launched in the autumn of 1992, and sandwiched between the front and back cover were four different Spidey stories, the first issue of Marvel UK's Motormouth, a feature covering 20 spectacularly amazing facts about Spider-man, and a home grown comedy strip called *The Fantastic 400*. On top of that, one of the Spidey stories was the reprinting of his first appearance in *Amazing Fantasy* #15 from 1962 and there was also a set of free trading cards taped to the front cover to entice children wanting more than just words and pictures to entertain them. That was a lot of content for what would have appeared as any other comic on the rack, but for Marvel UK it was the equivalent of having Geoff Capes fronting the brand, with a free gift attached to his chest. Spider-man had become the icon of Marvel Comics and as Editor of *Exploits of Spider-man*, Tim Quinn announced within his opening message on the inside cover to that first issue, "Let's all live vicariously through Spider-man's exploits here each month." The issue promised Spidey and it certainly delivered, but located within that compendium covering the life and times of Peter Parker was also an advert for other Marvel UK titles including *Overkill*, *Warheads* and *The Knights of Pendragon*. The advert also listed other titles for release later that year as well as ones coming in 1993 and the heading this all fell under was 'Where heroes are born...' There seemed to be no stopping Marvel's mighty UK comics industry from pushing out titles and as the comics boom of the 90s was in full swing everything seemed to be connecting into place quite neatly.

As each month passed, The *Exploits of Spider-man* continued to roll out and showcased some of Spider-man's greatest villains, such as The Vulture, Doctor Octopus and The Lizard with a mix of classic and contemporary tales to create a great jumping on point for readers. With the villainous Venom, a quickly established Spidey nemesis already being part of the wall-crawler's universe, the comic was fortunate that the ferocious Carnage, a much deadlier form of trouble, was on hand to make up any shortfall. His first full appearance in issue 10 provided a story for the next few months and possibly helped keep readers occupied as Motormouth's inclusion came to an end by issue 14. All was not lost though as Marvel UK still plugged away forging a name for itself and also celebrated a birthday having achieved 21 years in the business. Like its American counterpart the root to creating familiarity amongst fans was to let them know who was providing them with their plentiful Spider-man bounty each month, so issues would often feature a who's who of the Marvel UK office. Not just content with that, the comic featured competitions, one of which was in conjunction with the popular children's television programme *Rolfs Cartoon Club*, and even photos of Spider-man and Deaths Head II posing on London rooftops or in front of iconic red pillar boxes. This along with Marvel UK's appearance at the Lord Mayor's Parade in 1993 seemed to be a continued attempt to inform the county that they were still going strong and had been for quite a while. Unfortunately images of ill-fitting Wolverine, Cyclops and Dr Strange costumes, made everyone involved look as if they were attending a mate's stag night and did nothing to convince Britain to take the genre seriously. Still they were trying and the comic continued to remain consistent as it changed editors to Stuart Bartlett, Glenn Dakin and David Leach along the way.

Spider-man interest was riding high and with the engrossing *Maximum Carnage* storyline appearing in *Exploits*, a radio drama playing out each week night on Radio One, and constant talk concerning James Cameron directing a Spidey movie it looked like all of Marvel UK's work might finally be noticed. If Marvel could just achieve that big mainstream movie to open the door for non comic fans, then Marvel UK would have more people suddenly wanting to explore what they had to offer. There was potentially a whole county full of readers willing to pick up titles but they just hadn't realised they might like characters that had never really appealed before. Sadly for *Exploits of Spider-man* this wasn't to be, and with issue 40 in the autumn of 1995 it all came to an abrupt end. The final issue was billed as a complete Spidey epic and contained just one story made up of several parts to round out the page count. After three years it was all over, and although it wasn't the end for the web-slinger who continued on in two other titles soon after, it was a shame that the comic wouldn't be there with him. In such a short time it had attempted to promote an awareness of Marvel UK with Spidey's help and had it been a decade later it might have succeeded. With the Spider-man movie blowing the industry wide open for a new audience in 2002, it could only have happened because of the perseverance of those that came along the way and believed he could do it. The *Exploits of Spider-man* may not have been there at the finishing line, but will always be remembered for the elbow grease Marvel UK put in during the 90s and the fond memories they created at a time when anything seemed possible. ●

More from Alex next issue!

In 1946, barely a year after the defeat of the Japanese, a small, blood-stained notebook was found at the scene of a brutal jungle battle. In it was one of the strangest stories ever to come out of the Second World War. The story of ... Darkie's mob!

BLACK AS SATAN

INTO THE JUNGLE WITH DARKIE'S MOB

BY MARTIN JONES

Darkie's Mob first appeared in IPC Magazines' *Battle* comic between 1976-7. I was perhaps too young to read the strip upon its initial appearance, my attention no doubt diverted (for the time being) by the likes of *The Beano* and *The Dandy*. By 1981 however, I was an obsessive *2000AD* reader and buyer of all things IPC, and found the original stories reprinted - under the 'Best of Battle' banner - in the merged *Battle Action*. Written by Judge Dredd creator John Wagner and drawn by Mike Western, the strip had undergone a few changes in its four-year absence. The colour pages were gone, as were a few episodes here and there, but the power to entertain and horrify my ten-year-old eyes remained undiminished...

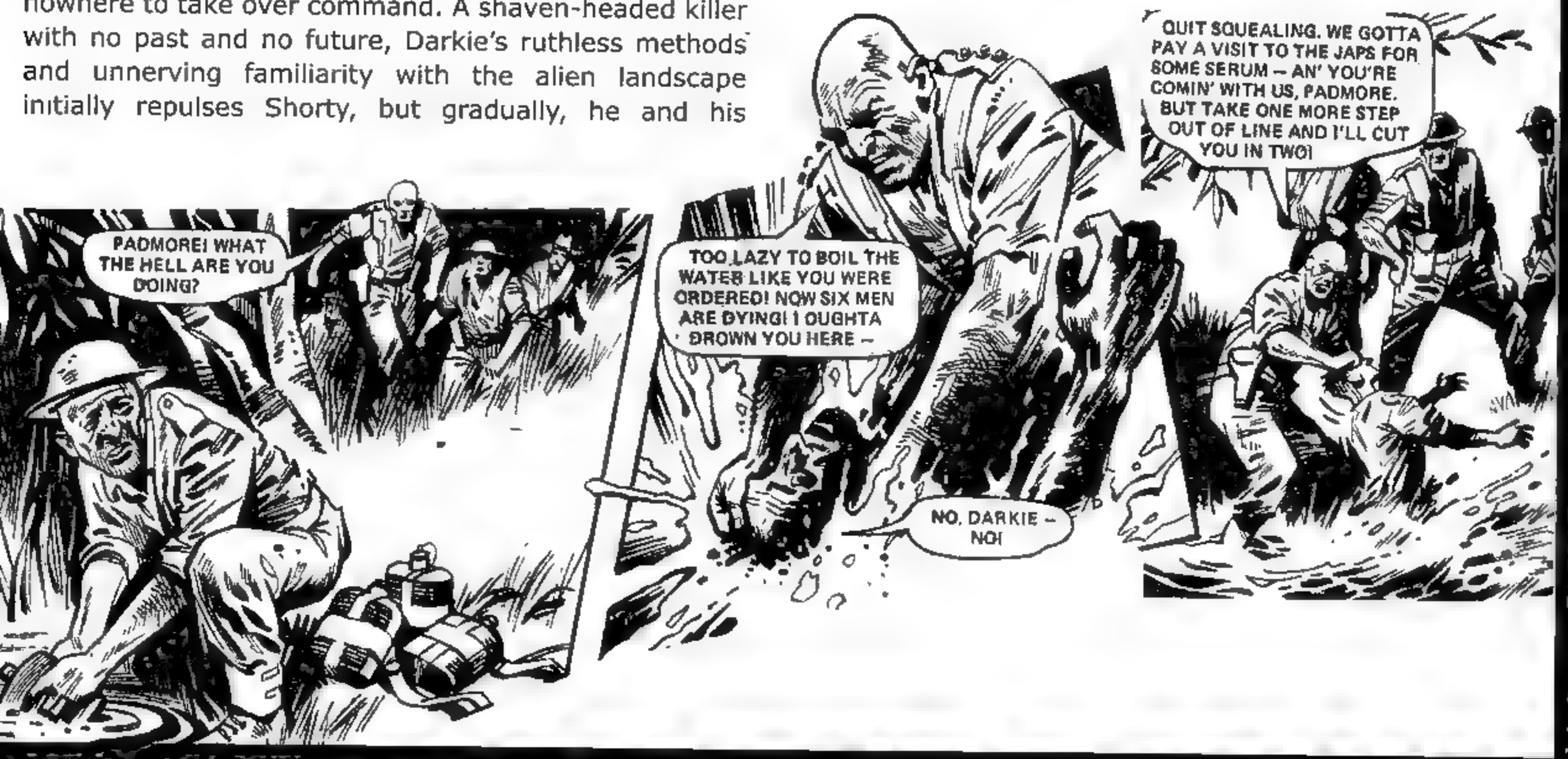
Apart from the classic First World War saga of *Charley's War*, *Darkie's Mob* stood alone in *Battle* as one of the bleakest tales it ever printed. Seventies sister-title *Action* had the habit of flinching ideas wholesale from contemporary Hollywood films, and although Wagner and Western's strip has the taint of the more cynical war movie – especially from the likes of Samuel Fuller, Robert Aldrich and Sam Peckinpah – it is through the work of Joseph Conrad, particularly *Heart of Darkness*, that a major influence can be found. From the opening, beautifully-cinematic premise – a blood-stained notebook discovered after the war – *Darkie's Mob* carries with it that base Conradian pessimism throughout.

Set in Japanese-occupied Burma during 1942-3, the story is told through Private Richard 'Shorty' Shortland's battle-log. Shorty is just one member of a British unit left for dead in the malevolent jungle after their commanding officer is killed. Left for dead that is, until the mysterious Captain Joe Darkie materialises out of nowhere to take over command. A shaven-headed killer with no past and no future, Darkie's ruthless methods and unnerving familiarity with the alien landscape initially repulses Shorty, but gradually, he and his comrades come round to their Captain's animal way of thinking; and, as Darkie toughens them up and leads them deeper and deeper into occupied Burma, one thing becomes certain: not one of them will leave the jungle alive.

STOP DARKIE MUST DIE PROPERLY – IN THE MORNING. UNTIL THEN I WILL HAVE A LITTLE FUN WITH HIM. TAKE THE OTHERS AWAY!
Back in the prison hut where the Nips kept us, the Mob looked beaten...
DARKIE WAS OUR LAST CHANCE. OUR GOOSE IS COOKED, SHORTY BOY
NOT QUITE-SARGE DARKIE SLIPPED ME THIS CLOTH WHEN HE FELL AGAINST ME. IT'S BEEN SOAKED IN SNAKE VENOM. CAN YOU STILL MAKE ONE OF THEM BLAY PIPES?
It was a simple matter to hollow out a length of bamboo, from a bunk...
The darts we made from badge pins wrapped round with rattan matting.
We had to soak the cloth with spit to moisten the dried venom.....
The two guards fell no more than a sharp pain – but it was enough to get them to sleep.
RIGHT BEHIND YOU, LIEUTENANT MEEKER
ALWAYS KNEW MY HOOK WOULD COME IN HANDY. NICE WORK, BOYS. IT'S GETTING DARK. LET'S FIND DARKIE AND HIT THE HILLS.
THAT HUT WITH THE LIGHT. MOVE, LADS – AND KEEP IN THE SHADOWS.
THE RAT HE'S PULLING HIS TOENAILS OUT
COME ON – LET'S GET AT THEM.
THE PRISONERS!

FEW ARTISTS COULD HAVE CAPTURED THE BRUTALITY OF THIS WAR BETTER THAN MIKE WESTERN

The mob's journey is death, hardship and aggression in many forms: men are beheaded, blown up and crushed under tanks; the mob fights malaria, monsoons and, of course, 'Japs'. Darkie hates Japs. Really hates them. He's a dab hand with a Kukri when it comes to dispensing >


QUIT SQUEALING. WE GOTTA PAY A VISIT TO THE JAPS FOR SOME SERUM – AN' YOU'RE COMIN' WITH US, PADMORE. BUT TAKE ONE MORE STEP OUT OF LINE AND I'LL CUT YOU IN TWO!
TOO LAZY TO BOIL THE WATER LIKE YOU WERE ORDERED! NOW SIX MEN ARE DYING! I OUGHTA DROWN YOU HERE –
NO, DARKIE – NO!
PADMORE! WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU DOING?

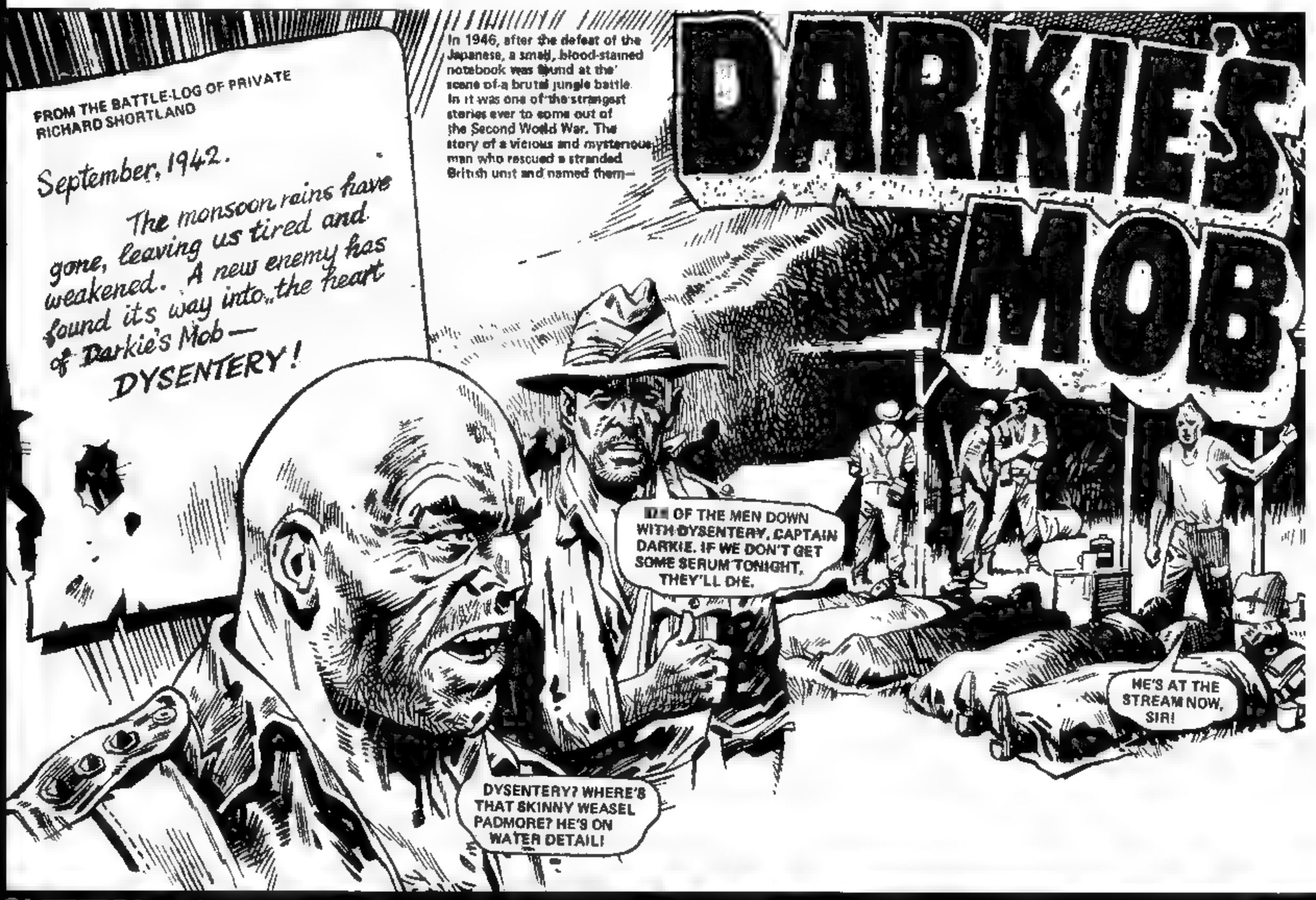
the yellow peril ("slice those slant-eyed sons of satan!"). Eventually, like a tropical malady, each soldier picks up his fatalistic instinct. After the near-final battle of Meeker's Ridge, Shorty (Marlow to Darkie's Kurtz) writes:

So Darkie's Mob slipped through the grip of death again – but two of us didn't make it. trench and tomlinson are dead. once darkie's mob were more than twenty..... now we are eight, and looking at their graves, I ask myself.. .. how long will it be before the rest of us join Tomlinson and trench?

Pretty damn soon. Almost every episode, in fact (one of the most memorable deaths is that of one-armed lieutenant Meeker, gunning a steam engine towards a head-on collision). Throughout, the tone of *Darkie's Mob* was pure black, "black as satan!" as one character puts it. Unstoppable fate and sadistic revenge run through the stories like fresh blood over stone. Only Shorty's journal appears to be the one harbour from this madness, touched by a crash course in the frailty of mankind. When a soldier is dragged

dead from a swamp, he writes: "We gave hodgeman back to the quicksand. He'd be there for a million years." Eventually, this resignation becomes omnipresent, and Wagner hammers it home in every available panel. When Shorty asks: "Are we all going to die here like jungle rats?" Darkie replies, "You know it, Shorty. You've known it for a long time. None of us will ever leave this jungle alive...". Perhaps the most poignant moment in the series comes when the mob rescue a POW work detail. Darkie has them lined up as new additions to his army, but Shorty knocks him unconscious with his rifle butt and has the freed soldiers escorted to safety. He knows that the mob are damned, that there can be no escape except death...

It's the nihilism and borderline misanthropy of John Wagner's story that makes *Darkie's Mob* a true original. And it's hard to imagine any *Battle* staff artist other than Mike Western tackling the job of realising Wagner's scripts: His stygian artwork is at once the perfect boys-own action story style and yet distinctive enough to render each panel a classic (he also dives into the gore with gusto!). Towards the end, the remaining members of the mob get to find out who Darkie really is, and why he hates the Japanese so much... and *Darkie's Mob* concludes soon after that. I won't spoil it for the unconverted, suffice to say that the denouement for all concerned is

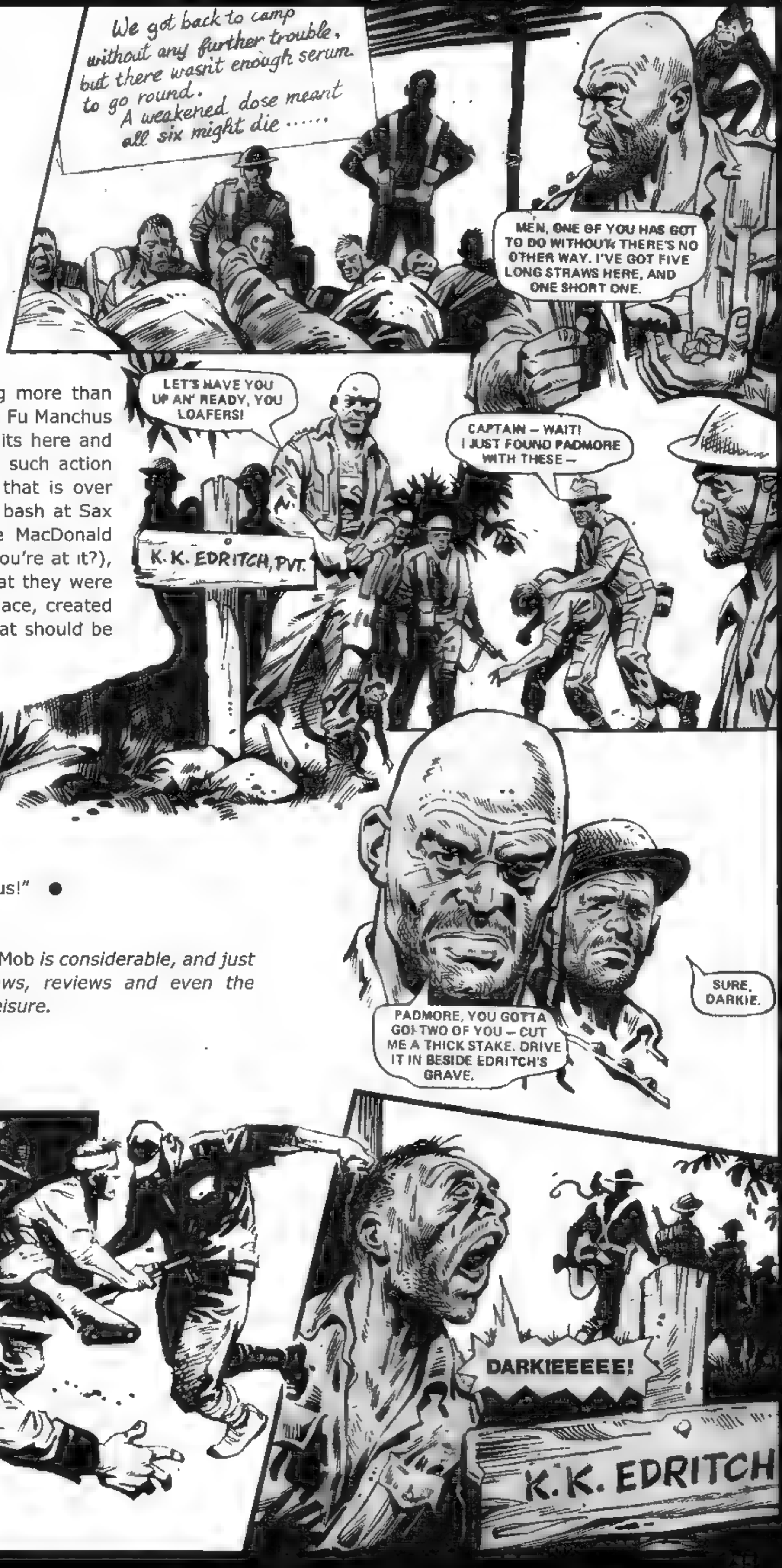

FROM THE BATTLE-LOG OF PRIVATE RICHARD SHORTLAND
September, 1942.
The monsoon rains have gone, leaving us tired and weakened. A new enemy has found its way into the heart of Darkie's Mob— DYSENTERY!
In 1946, after the defeat of the Japanese, a small, blood-stained notebook was found at the scene of a brutal jungle battle. In it was one of the strangest stories ever to come out of the Second World War. The story of a vicious and mysterious man who rescued a stranded British unit and named them—
DARKIE'S MOB
DYSENTERY? WHERE'S THAT SKINNY WEASEL PADMORE? HE'S ON WATER DETAIL!
OF THE MEN DOWN WITH DYSENTERY, CAPTAIN DARKIE. IF WE DON'T GET SOME SERUM TONIGHT, THEY'LL DIE.
HE'S AT THE STREAM NOW, SIR!

sudden and somewhat unexpected; but, given all that has been said and done before, not uncharacteristic. And the last panels bring the story back full circle to its heart of darkness origins.

In 2003, the *2000AD* spin-off *Judge Dredd Megazine* reprinted *Darkie's Mob*, purging it of some of the language that had occasionally led it to be labelled 'racist'. A bit like cutting off your nose to spite your face, as throughout the story Japanese soldiers are portrayed as nothing more than cold, sadistic murderers: A million Fu Manchus in the steaming jungle. A few edits here and there cannot erase this fact, and such action seems a little unfair for a work that is over thirty years old (why not have a bash at Sax Rohmer's *Pulp Fiction* or George MacDonald Fraser's *Flashman* novels whilst you're at it?), especially when one considers that they were just stories for kids in the first place, created in a totally different social era that should be placed in a historical, and not puritanical, context.

No matter, find the published versions from any decade, wallow in the terminal, hellish, Black-as-Satan world of *Darkie's Mob* and "hit them boys! Hit them hard! You may finish Darkie's Mob, rice eaters... but a lot of you are coming with us!" ●

The on-line presence of Darkie's Mob *is considerable, and just a Google search away: interviews, reviews and even the complete series to read at your leisure.*


We got back to camp without any further trouble, but there wasn't enough serum to go round. A weakened dose meant all six might die.....
MEN, ONE OF YOU HAS GOT TO DO WITHOUT. THERE'S NO OTHER WAY. I'VE GOT FIVE LONG STRAWS HERE, AND ONE SHORT ONE.
LET'S HAVE YOU UP AN' READY, YOU LOAFERS!
K. K. EDRITCH, PVT.
CAPTAIN – WAIT! I JUST FOUND PADMORE WITH THESE –
PADMORE, YOU GOTTA GO! TWO OF YOU – CUT ME A THICK STAKE. DRIVE IT IN BESIDE EDRITCH'S GRAVE.
SURE, DARKIE.
SHUT YOUR YELLOW MOUTH!
DARKIEEEEE!
K. K. EDRITCH

On 3 May 2010 Peter O'Donnell, the author of numerous novels, short stories, and comic strips, passed away at the age of 90. He was best known as the creator of Modesty Blaise, one of the most memorable characters in fiction.
***Jody Kihara** takes us on the long journey through Peter's amazing career...*

PETER O'DONNELL

In the Beginning

It is a story that most Modesty Blaise fans know well, and few can resist retelling. During World War II, Peter O'Donnell was stationed with his radio signal corps in what is now Iran. He and his company were having lunch one day when a young girl of about 7 years old walked by, dressed in an oversized shirt and carrying a small bundle on her head. The crudely made weapon she wore around her neck suggested that not only was she alone, she had been fending for herself for some time. Assuming she was a refugee, the men beckoned to her to take one of their heated tins of stew. Wary of them at first, she eventually accepted the food, and ate it at a safe distance. O'Donnell then gave her a few spare tins and a tin opener, showing her how to use the opener first, and making sure she could work it herself. She wasn't strong enough to pierce the tin, but she had the resourcefulness to drive the opener in with a rock. When she finished opening the tin, all the men cheered, and she gave them a smile "that could have lit up a whole village." She then picked up her bundle and walked away in a strikingly self-possessed manner, "like a princess". The little girl had made a deep impression upon O'Donnell – one that would resurface some 20 years later.

Strip Prolificacy

Peter O'Donnell began his professional writing career at age 16, when he sold his first story. After leaving school at age 17, he got a job writing for a strip called "Monarch of the Wild", which gave him good training in telling a story with a minimum of words.

His writing career was put on hold while he was in service. After WWII ended, he found work in the comic strip world again, writing strips for several daily newspapers: Belinda, Romeo Brown, and Garth for the Mirror; a strip version of James Bond (Dr. No) for the Express; Better or Worse for the Herald; and The Affairs of Eve and Tug Transom for The Sketch. Romeo Brown followed the misadventures of a bungling detective, and paired O'Donnell with artist Jim Holdaway; Tug Tramson was O'Donnell's own creation, which featured the adventures of a merchant ship captain. O'Donnell worked on these for many years (often writing several different strips simultaneously!) and also penned romance stories for women's magazines. A staggering output!

Well versed in writing both male and female characters, , he began to wonder why all the action/adventure protagonists were male. Where was their female equivalent?

BELOW: TUG TRANSOM, JAMES BOND, GARTH, AND ROMEO BROWN
FAR RIGHT: YOUNG MODESTY, FROM THE STORY 'IN THE BEGINNING'

WAS MACHST DU?
MIT KLEIDERN KOMME ICH WOHL KAUM DURCH UND DIES IST NICHT DER MOMENT FÜR PRÜDERIE.
NO QUESTIONS ON THIS JAMAICA ASIGNMENT? RIGHT — THEN THAT'S ALL
PIG-HEADED CLAM-TIGHT OLD MULE!
H'MM! I'VE GOT MY SUSPICIONS OF MONICA LEE! SHE COULD BE THE GHOUL!
I'D SUSPECT ANYBODY WHO'D JUST STARTED WORK HERE!— IT'S TOO CONVENIENT!
MAYBE I'LL TA... LOOK AT THA... LIBRARY— I DIDN'T HAVE A CHANCE TO STUDY IT BEFORE—
I SHOULD THINK ... ASLEEP BY ...
Q 221

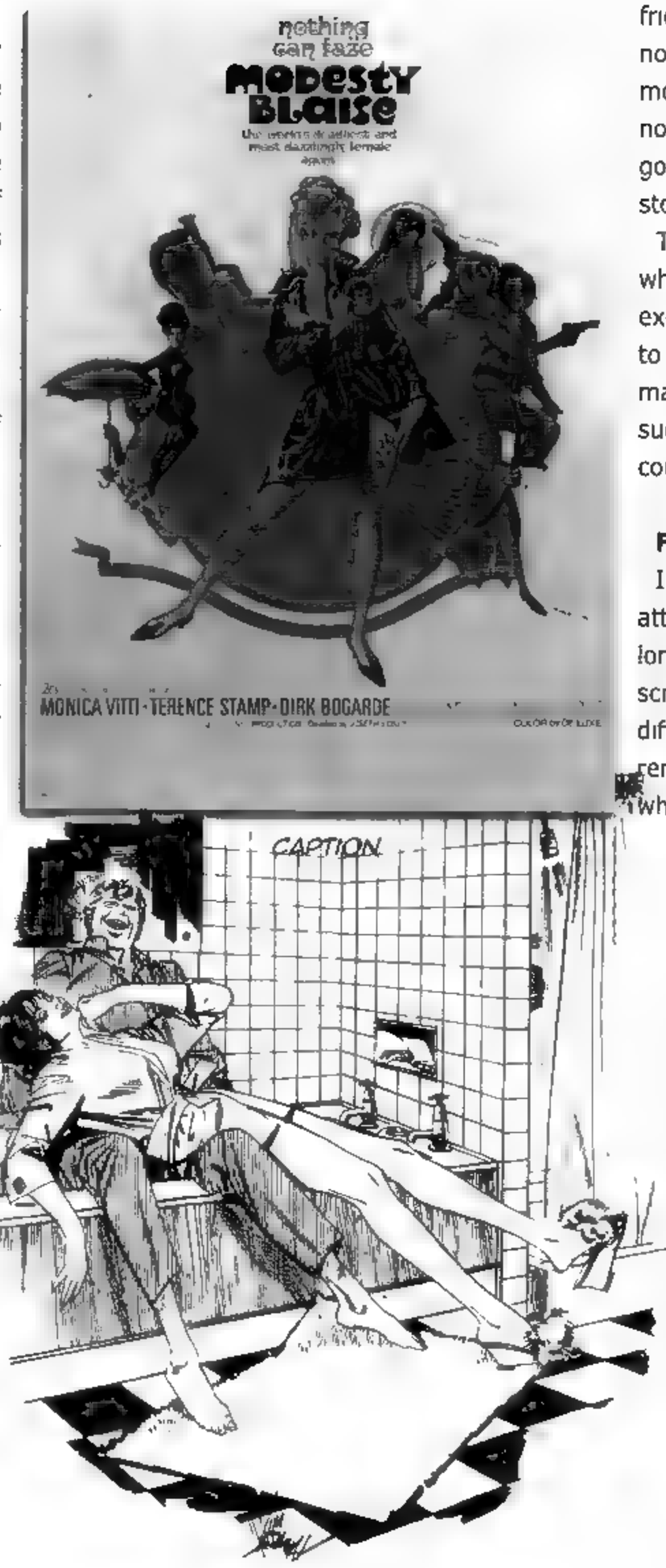
Modesty Blaise

The seeds of this concept were already germinating when O'Donnell was asked by the Daily Express to create a brand new strip entirely of his own design. This was a rare opportunity for a writer, as was the luxury of being able to spend several months conceptualizing it.

It took O'Donnell nine months to fully develop the idea and characters. He wanted a heroine who was fearless, resourceful, and capable of fighting men - and winning, of course. For this, she couldn't simply be a woman who had some martial arts training, she needed something deeper: a core instinct for survival. For her to be strong enough to lead men, and to kill in combat if necessary, she had to have known hardship and self-reliance from her earliest years. And so Peter O'Donnell didn't have to 'invent' the origins of Modesty Blaise; he had met her twenty years previously.

He picked up the fictional character's story from her childhood refugee years, and gave her a friend and tutor named Lob, an elderly man whom she looked after as they wandered the Middle East and North Africa. Not knowing her own name, she chose that of Merlin's tutor for her surname, and Lob gave her the name 'Modesty' as a joke, for she was anything but. (Although another story has it that O'Donnell hit upon the name when he mistyped 'modestly'. Fate at work again?)

After Lob died, the teenaged Modesty went on to take over a small gang in the Mediterranean, which she eventually built into The Network, a criminal organization involved in jewel and art theft. During her Network years, Modesty met Willie Garvin, who became her right hand man and most trusted friend. At the age of twenty-six, wealthy and not feeling the need to amass any more money, she retired from crime. But if she was not going to seek out trouble, then it was going to find her... And that is where the strip story begins.



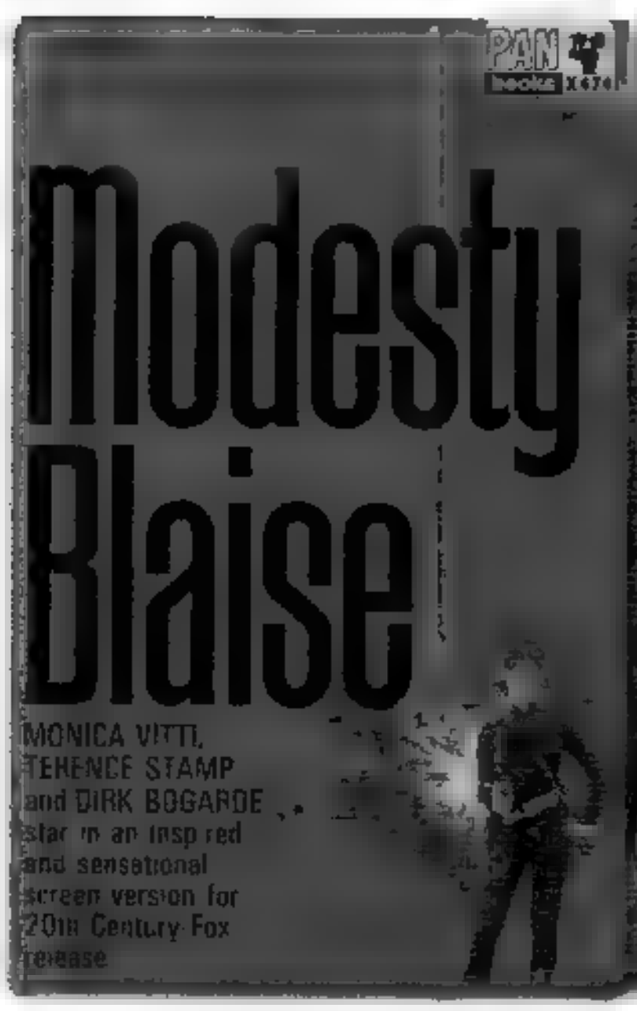
The Express passed on the strip, however, when they discovered the protagonist was an ex-criminal! The Evening Standard was eager to snap it up, and in 1963, Modesty Blaise made her debut. The strip was an instant success, going on to be syndicated in 40 countries and running for 38 years.

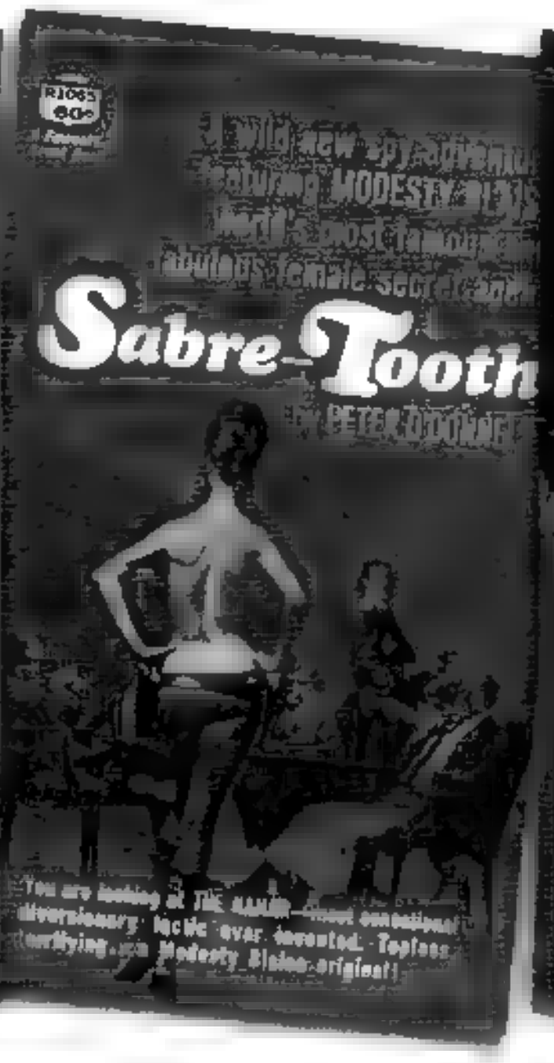
From Strip to Film to Novel

International success tends to attract the attention of the film industry, and it wasn't long before O'Donnell was asked to write a screenplay. He did, but after rewrites by five different people (with only one original line remaining), the casting of an Italian actress who couldn't speak English, and a director who was more interested in 1960s campness than any faithfulness to O'Donnell's creation, the film was an unmitigated disaster. To this day, Modesty fans still lament how such potential was turned into such travesty.

Correction, there was one mitigating factor: the film spawned the series of novels. O'Donnell had been asked to write a book to tie in with the film release. With complete control over this creation, and freed of the tight constraints of a 3-panel strip, O'Donnell's imagininativeness - and superb writing - flourished. The characters had even more depth, giving astonishing life to the stories, and creating some quite touching moments. O'Donnell's talent for description made the books as vivid as any film, and his mastery of suspense surpassed the bounds of the strip. >

MODESTY BLAISE BOOKS AND COMIC COLLECTIONS





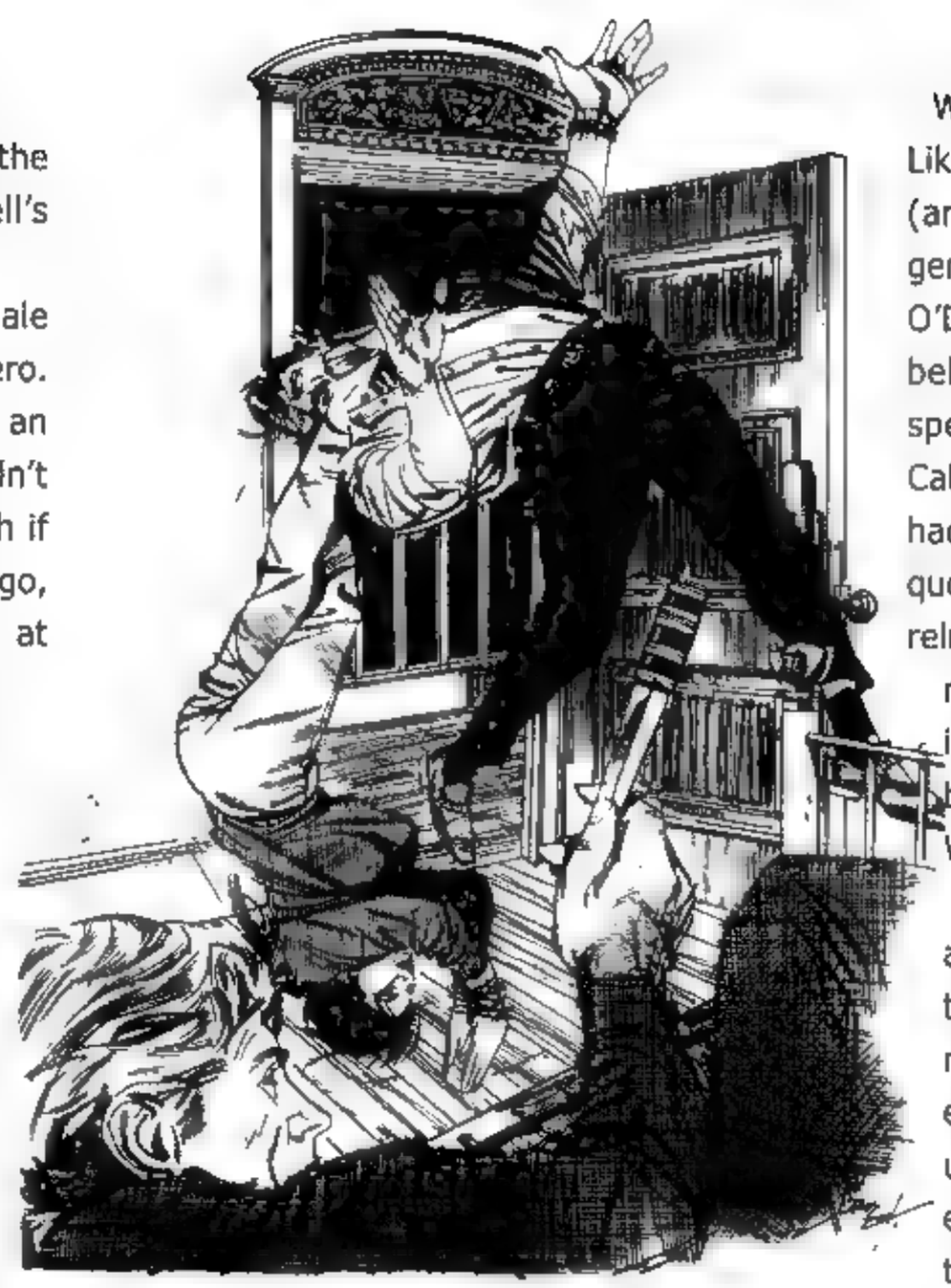
The Characters

The enormous success of the comics and the books seems largely due to O'Donnell's intriguing and complex characters.

Modesty was an original: she was a female adventure protagonist, but not a superhero. She was an ex-criminal (the leader of an international syndicate, no less) who didn't favour violence, but could fight to the death if need be. Her weapon of choice was the kongo, a small wooden dumbbell used to strike at nerve points; but really, her true weapons were her instincts and her quick thinking. In the world of 1963, this fresh new take on a female role soon made her an icon.

Is it ironic that a character that was to become a role model for thousands of women was created by a male? Perhaps that was what was needed at the time; but it is testament to the uniqueness, believability, and timelessness of O'Donnell's character that she remains a role model today. Peter O'Donnell revealed in an interview that he often received letters from women telling him that when they were in a difficult situation, they would ask themselves "what would Modesty do?" It was not just Modesty's ability to hold her own against men that inspired this; it was her ability to calmly take stock of a situation, accept it, and plan her next move.

Much more than her abilities, however, are the deeper traits that make her so well-loved: her resolute belief in herself, her dignity, and her unshakeable ability to remain who she is, no matter how dire the situation. She seems, even to this day, a model of perfect balance: she is self-assured without being arrogant; she is utterly self-reliant - and will fight or even kill to survive - but is also deeply compassionate and protective. The list could go on: she doesn't bear grudges; she seems to be entirely without vanity; she is happy in her own company but enjoys lasting friendships. What this all adds up to is that she is guided by a strong moral compass, and it is this that sets her adventures in motion. If it weren't for Modesty's protective instinct, she wouldn't find herself embroiled in half the capers she does.



Modesty's background worked perfectly for the character. She has no compunctions about her days as a thief, probably from the fact that as a child, the law of survival was steal food or die. But even as a child, she was already looking after others; and we can see that her friendship with Lob instilled in her the ability to trust others.

When she meets Willie Garvin, a cockney con-man and fighter with a dissolute past but a sense of humour to make up for it, she has found her perfect match: she has found a deep friendship again, but this time with someone who is her equal.

Willie was as great a creation as Modesty. Like her, he shows the same survival instincts (and lethal abilities, if need be), but is generally brimming with good cheer and wit. O'Donnell enjoyed adding a bizarre yet believable details to Willie's past: from spending several months locked up in a Calcutta jail with only a Psalter to read, Willie had memorized all the psalms, and enjoyed quoting them to villains, particularly the faux-religious one. He shows humour even in the most dire situations, and from a back-story in Dead Man's Handle (of Willie's almost-botched first Network job), we learn that it is Willie who taught Modesty to laugh.

What seems to fascinate people most about Modesty and Willie, however, is not their individual characters, but their relationship. They have each truly met their equal. They can rely on each other to the utmost, even in life or death situations, and even have an instinct for how the other is thinking. Willie calls Modesty 'Princess' (an echo of O'Donnell's impression of the young refugee girl), reflecting his deep respect for her. Although Willie sees Modesty as his mentor and leader, Modesty treats him as her equal; in her first meeting with Sir Gerald Tarrant of British intelligence, she makes it clear that she does not command Garvin.

They have one of the deepest and truest friendships ever seen. Perhaps what inspires people most about their relationship is that it embodies the idea of a soul mate, but in an

ABOVE & BELOW: JIM HOLDAWAY'S MODESTY

even purer form. Given not only the lack of sexual relationship, but complete absence of sexual tension, theirs is a completely unselfish relationship: neither wants anything from the other, yet one would happily lay down their life for the other. We see an incredibly touching scene in The Impossible Virgin, when Modesty thinks Willie is dead and recalls all her fond memories of him. "Yours was the only shoulder I ever cried on."

There were numerous other recurring characters: Tarrant and Fraser, Steve and Dinah Collier, Giles Pennyfeather, John Dall, Lady Janet... all contributed to the richness of the stories, and brought out different facets of Modesty and Willie.

The Artists

The characters were not solely responsible for the strip's success, of course: the artists took the strip to international celebrity.

Frank Hampson was the artist initially put onto the project, but his trial panels were rejected. At that point Peter O'Donnell insisted on Jim Holdaway, with whom he'd worked for seven years on Romeo Brown.

And it was Jim Holdaway who brought Modesty fully to life. She was beautiful and exotic, with slightly Eurasian features, and seemed rather cold and distant at first, letting us know she was not to be trifled with. But we saw her warmth as soon as she was in the company of Willie Garvin. Holdaway's artistry suited the strip perfectly: his other characters were masterfully drawn, particularly Garvin, and he maintained a wonderful balance between clarity and detail.

He and O'Donnell worked on the strip for seven years, until Holdaway's sudden death in 1970. This was more than a professional loss for O'Donnell, who had become close friends with Holdaway over their fourteen years together. The search for a new artist had to begin, however. Many applied, due to the immense popularity of the strip, but none seemed quite right until an agent suggest a young Spanish artist by the name of Enric Badia Romero.

Romero, who lived in Barcelona, took over halfway through a story (the Warlords of Phoenix). At first he tried to stay faithful to Holdaway's Modesty, but soon let his own style develop. Modesty's figure became more curvaceous, and her posture more feminine; already, by the end of the Warlords story, we see her sitting in a pin-up-like pose. As time went on, Romero gave her a slightly wider face and more pronounced cheekbones. Her clothing style changed too: she suddenly had a penchant for plunging necklines and clothes that easily fell to tatters, and was often pictured in a state of deshabillé.

O'Donnell's own Modesty, as seen in the novels (which he continued to write through the 1970s and 80s) was far more tasteful and practical. In fact, the descriptions of her outfits were so express that I once felt the need to >

NEVILLE COLVIN'S VERSION OF MODESTY. (INSET): JOHN M BURNS' RENDITION.
COMICS REVUE
$5.95
#158
More Than 60 Pages Of Your Favorite Comic Strips Including
Buz Sawyer • The Phantom • Gasoline Alley • Steve Canyon
Alley Oop Modesty Blaise • Krazy Kat • Tarzan • Flash Gordon

(RIGHT): COMCS REVUE REPRINT OF 'IN THE BEGINNING'; (BELOW):ROMERO'S MODESTY AND WILLIE; (BOTTOM): FRANK HAMPSON'S REJECTED TRIAL STRIPS

YOU DO WHAT YOU LIKE WITH THEM—WE DON'T TAKE ON EXECUTIONS
YOU KNOW SOMETHING, WILLIE LOVE? WE WENT ALL THROUGH THAT CAPER AND NEITHER OF US GOT HURT FOR A CHANGE — WE MUST BE GETTING LUCKY
2162
OH, I DUNNO, PRINCESS... MAYBE WE'RE IMPROVING?

ask him how it was that he had such impeccable taste in women's fashions! (Apparently his wife provided this advice.) When planning for a caper, Modesty was pragmatic to the utmost: black clothes (of the non-tattering variety) for night raids; boots; and various weapons and tools secreted in her apparel. Romero, by contrast, managed to give her a décollé neckline even when she was wearing fatigues.

Perhaps this is one reason for the divide between the Holdaway and Romero camps of fans: some found the practical Modesty more believable, while others found Romero's balance of sensuousness versus seriousness more in keeping with the complexity of her character. (Or perhaps they just liked the greater number of semi-nude scenes).

Either way, Romero's work proved vastly popular, and he illustrated the strip for seven years. When he left in 1978 to start his own strip (Axa), it was again difficult to find the right artist. John Burns worked on the strip for a year, and Pat Wright less than a year. Neville Colvin then came on board, and illustrated the strip for six years. He retired in 1986, and the hunt was on again... and fans were delighted to hear that Romero would return. He continued to illustrate the strip until it ended in 2001 due to Peter O'Donnell's retirement. In total, O'Donnell had written 99 strip stories (including a graphic novel version of the first book, for DC Comics, illustrated by Dick Giordano).

It was a sad day for Evening Standard readers when the Modesty Blaise strip ended, but with reprints available from Comics Revue and Titan books, amassing a collection became much easier.

Film, TV, and Other Media

Despite Modesty Blaise's international renown as a strip and book series, the lack of faithful film treatment seems puzzling, especially given how well the James Bond books translated to film. The Modesty Blaise novels seem perfect material, and fans worldwide have voiced their wishes for a film that does Modesty justice. Internet chat groups still excitedly debate whom they would cast as Modesty and Willie!

O'Donnell had in fact penned two other complete screenplays based on his novels.

In 1982, Paramount Television made a pilot for a Modesty Blaise TV series (set in the USA, and with an American Modesty and Willie). The series never went ahead, and O'Donnell's opinion of the pilot was so low that he threw

ART BY: JIM HOLDAWAY, ROMERO, DICK GIORDANO.JAPANESE FILM POSTER, AGENT X9 MAGAZINE, MODESTY MEETS WILLIE

Titan Books are currently reprinting the Modesty Blaise strips (they are about halfway through the 99 stories) and Souvenir Press has reprinted all 13 novels. Comics Revue also continues to reprint the strips, and the December 2010 issue will feature new Romero artwork. In Sweden, Agent X9 magazine has recently embarked on a project to reprint all the strips from newly acquired original artwork -- more on this story in another edition of Crikey! And for the avid Modesty Blaise collector, a few copies of The Modesty Blaise Companion can still be found for sale (this has a concordance of all characters to appear in the strips and books, as well as a synopsis of every story). The Modesty Blaise films are both available on DVD.

Thanks to all of the Modesty fans who contributed artwork and information. Peter O'Donnell will be dearly missed by all of us.

WELCOME TO

Crikey!

THE GREAT BRITISH COMICS MAGAZINE!

Glenn B Fleming *Publisher/Editor/Designer*

Everything changes in life. And like life, that means that this magazine changes too. Some of you will be wondering why this issue isn't boasting the fantastic Dalek cover as advertised last issue. Well, simply put, I changed it after learning that artist John Hicklenton had sadly died, aged 42. I wanted to show as much of John's artwork as possible and it is in tribute to him that his artwork is on the cover of this issue. The Dalek's will appear next issue - but of course, that may change! Then, I had to make the decision to drop a fabulous article covering 'I-Spy' written by Rab Smith because Peter (*Modesty Blaise*) O'Donnell passed away. Without being morbid, I felt these two greats should be honoured in the pages of this magazine - and I make no apology for that. So here they are, living on through their work. This issue has been both a pleasure and hard work putting together for obvious reasons. So, though life changes, it still goes on... and so does *Crikey! The Great British Comics Magazine!*

Tony Ingram *Editor/Writer*

It's been a bad couple of months for the world of comics. On March 19th, *2000AD* stalwart John Hicklenton, best known for his amazing artwork on *Judge Dredd* and *Nemesis*, passed away at the absurdly young age of 42 after a lengthy battle with Multiple Sclerosis. Then, on May 3rd *Modesty Blaise* creator Peter O'Donnell died aged 90, leaving behind him a writing career that spanned some 65 years. And on the 10th of May, legendary American fantasy artist Frank Frazetta, justly famed for his paintings but also admired worldwide for his comics work on titles as diverse as National's 'Shining Knight', 'Johnny Comet' and Al Capp's 'L'il Abner' was taken by a stroke at the age of 82. As Glenn has pointed out, both John and Peter are remembered in this issue; the news of Frank's passing sadly came a bit too late, having reached us only on the day that the final running order was fixed. Of course, John's death is made all the more tragic by his youth, but it's a sobering thought that we've lost so many true greats of the industry in recent years. Thankfully, their work will remain, to be appreciated by audiences both old and new for many years to come. A life in comics may seem to some a strange form of immortality, but it's a rather special one all the same.

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Contributors this issue:
Glenn B Fleming, Tony Ingram, Mike Burnett, John Devaney, Steve Hooker, Martin Jones, Jodie Kihara, Peter Maddocks, Pat Mills, David Slinn & Alex Wiggan.
Special thanks to: Nigel Fleming, Peter Moore

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away the tape copy he had been given. By now he'd had two bad experiences with film and TV, but he went ahead and wrote a screenplay of The Silver Mistress, as he thought it had all the elements of a great action/adventure film (not least of all the nude fight scene). He sent it off to Paramount, who coincidentally had just created a British offshoot. They bought the script, and were at the point of casting the film when Paramount UK was shut down.

In 2002, Miramax produced the straight-to-DVD film 'My Name is Modesty', reportedly because their option on the Modesty Blaise film rights was about to expire. The film follows Modesty's pre-Network days with Lob. Although leagues better than the 1966 film, it still doesn't quite capture the essence of Modesty, whom we know to be much tougher. The best part, for most Modesty fans, is the interview with O'Donnell in the extras!

While the film was in production, O'Donnell was busy adapting A Taste for Death, of his own volition. However, after My Name is Modesty came out, O'Donnell apparently asked that no more film versions of Modesty Blaise be made.

Yet two scripts still sit there...

Modesty Blaise also inspired music, artwork, merchandise (did you know you can buy a Modesty Blaise suitcase?), and went on to influence other comic, literary, and even videogame characters.

And during his years of vast productivity, O'Donnell also wrote a series of historical romances under the nom de plume Madeleine Brent (same initials as Modesty Blaise!) as well as a play, a TV serial, and another (non-Modesty) screenplay. Again, one wonders how he managed it all!

Cobra Trap: Spoiler Alert

The last Modesty Blaise book to be written, Cobra Trap, is a collection of short stories, the last of which tells the story of Modesty and Willie's demise. Apparently O'Donnell didn't want anyone else to write the character of Modesty Blaise, nor could he imagine Modesty and Willie growing old, so he wanted to give them a fitting and worthy ending. Many Modesty Blaise fans admit to still not being able to read that final story.

Farewell Peter

And so in May 2010, 47 years after Modesty's creation, 9 years after the strip ended, and a few weeks after his 90th birthday, Peter O'Donnell passed away. Fans from all over the world had sent birthday greetings to Mr. O'Donnell, a testament to how well-loved his work was, and how admired and respected he was.

Following the announcement of his passing, one member of the online Modesty Blaise fan group suggested that as a fitting tribute, everyone reread the final story in Cobra Trap. Some agreed, but others admitted they still couldn't bring themselves to read that story! That is how real these characters have become to us: their demise is as upsetting to us as that of Mr. O'Donnell.

Given the number of Modesty Blaise strip and novel reprints still in production, it seems that Modesty's demise never really 'took'; she and Willie live on. You can't cheat death... unless you're Modesty Blaise.

One final piece I wish could fit into this story to make it complete: what became of the refugee child that inspired Modesty Blaise? One of my greatest wishes is that someone would track her down ? perhaps living, after all these years, in the Middle East, or wandering North Africa as Modesty had. Thousands of Modesty fans would be agog to hear her story; and how wonderful it would be for her to discover the character she had inspired. Or perhaps she already has?

One thing I am certain of: wherever Mr. O'Donnell has gone on to, he will someday encounter her again. And together they can watch with fascination (and perhaps mirth, as Modesty and Willie would) the impression they have made – and continue to make - upon the world.

Happy trails to them both, wherever they are.

Jody Kihara, 2010 *(www.jodykihara.com)*

COBRA TRAP
PETER O'DONNELL
MODESTY BLAISE
Illustrated by ENRIQUE ROMERO
100 BULLETS • LONDON 1960-SPECIAL • SOMMARKR
Modesty blaise
AGENT X9
EPISOD 12:
BAD SUKI
BUT IF YOU HAVE YOUR
CHECK THE BAT
IT'S GONE DEAD
MORE MODESTY BOOKS, COMICS, AND MERCHANDISE, INCLUDING A NEW AGENT X9 COVER BY ARTIST LOOPY DAVE
PETER O'DONNELL WITH THE HAXTUR AWARD, FOR BAD SUKI
Features
Farewell my lovely

AND, WHILE I'M AT IT...

A new, regular column from Stephen Hooker~ the second person to take a copy of Crikey! *on holiday!*

IN A MYLAR BAG, NO ONE CAN HEAR YOU SCREAM!

They say, as a comic reader, you can run but you can't hide from the smell of an old comic. It's a very distinct smell, heady, intoxicating, a rancid mixture of chemical breakdown and paper rot, that will simply hunt you down. Then again, may be the odour should be bottled and sold at comic conventions, teamed with an ad campaign aimed at impressing that special, just met, lady friend; hands having briefly touched in a box of mutilated back cover Buntys.

The ad line could be: Let the chosen one in your life smell of Jet, all twenty-two issues, browning in your boudoir. Or: The scent of a hobby. Grade that special one in your life by smell.

Or some such. I'm no Madman.

Judging by my family, I'm the only one in the village that revels in the smell of old comics, the mouldy interior impregnated with someone else's damp and decay, whufting off brittle, browning pages, musty and fragrant.

When I bring an aging comic into the lounge, family members sneeze their heads off, pull faces and order the immediate removal of that stinky thing. And, for once, they are not talking about me.

I'm only an Argos trip away from buying my own loft chair and spending time surrounded by what remains of my comic collection; stink and all. And that would show the rest of my family a thing or two; like how to cheer in unison for a start.

I can confirm that Argos do indeed sell loft chairs. Check out page 666 of the indispensable catalogue, on the same page as nasal and ear trimmers, Tenna for men and membership subscriptions to *Steam Railway Today*!

If there's no such a thing as 'comic reader's lung' then there should be. I might actually have it. I'd ask for it to be named after me of course, except, I suspect it would be confused with other, more personal, maladies, owing to the suggestive nature of my surname. And, frankly, Rugby Lung doesn't quite cut it!

But I digress.

The terminology used to describe the condition of comics has an arcane vocabulary. Foxing, spine roll, bindery defect, unclipped, blunted corner, colour fleck, dimple, dust shadow, finger oils, ink skip, staple rust migration, tanning line and the ever popular moisture damage. To name but a few.

To me, for about three decades, comic book condition was everything. Even now, I use the same over-inspection when buying books and I never buy the first magazine sitting in the rack, I go back as many copies as there are to find one unsullied by other human hands. Never the last copy though, we all know that one's been mercilessly pawed. And planted there by the newsagent, trying to fool us into buying the tattered thing. But we're on to his nefarious plan, aren't we chums?

A lone tumble weed rolls across the gulf between the two of us. Which is a good sign, isn't it?

Being addicted to 1970s comic books means, with the exception of the cherished but often dismissed, Starlord, that the paper quality will be, well, non-existent. And I must say, I'm quite pleased by that fact, for this reason and this reason alone.

Except, first, a quick hop across the Atlantic and our fellow US of A comic collectors. Condition again is everything, actually to the point of being, for me anyway, faintly ridiculous on three grounds.

Number one, Mylar comic bags. Designed so the plastic of the bag, a polyethylene compound (if I have to know that, you have to know that too; that's how research works; I suffer, you suffer; it's the law), that never reacts with the chemicals in the ink and paper of a comic enclosed in it. I used to buy my comic bags at roughly a £1.00 for a hundred. They were actually those bags that fun fairs used to hold the gold fish in, should you have been unfortunate to win one. Mylar bags, on the other hand, where £1.00 each when they first appeared in 1979.

Secondly, backing boards, how to make a low ranking comic look like it's worth something. Stick a backing board behind it. And the boards come in three flavours too, chipboard, acid free and super acid free. I can just about accept backing boards as packing for postage. But that's it. Otherwise it's akin to digging up a body and sticking a rod up its back.

Lastly, CGC, how to entomb comics in hard plastic jackets and quibble for the rest of your life over the grading it received. Endlessly in blogs, twitters and your FaceBook page. All the time wondering why dozens of online friends keep disappearing. One of Dante's circles of Hell must surely contain comic collectors endlessly grading and regarding comics. And bitching about each other's grading.

Which leaves me appreciative of the actual size of UK comics and the paper quality, too big and printed on paper that those puppy dogs would reject and never chase after in those adorable TV commercials.

That's my one reason.

Comics are here to be enjoyed and, as my son, Neil, pointed out to me once, if it's in a plastic box, how are you ever going to read it?

Thankfully, with UK comics, the bulk of them will be tanned, foxed, suffer from rust migration and all the other countless defects that age brings (like the hair on my ears and sprouting out my nose).

For me, every UK comic is a readable copy, except those, backed with board, sealed in a bag and lost to the sterile world of comic collectors. Never to see the light of day again.

And that, that makes me scream.

But will you hear me? ●

NUTTY NOTIONS

Each issue of *Crikey!* features a selection of some of the lovingly bizarre concepts that have graced the pages of British comics in years past. Once again *Tony Ingram* proves that he has read way too many comics in his time... *Ideas and nominations for future Nutty Notions gratefully accepted through the* Crikey! *website (www.crikeyuk.co.uk), click 'contact' and away you go! Enjoy!*

CASTAWAYS ON PLANET DOOM (CRACKER, 1975)

Art by Terry Patrick

The Wheeler family-Mum, Dad, Jim and Janet and their little dog, Patch-probably weren't expecting much in the way of excitement when they packed their tent and went on a cycling holiday, but they got more than they bargained for when they were abducted by aliens from the planet Doom! Luckily for the ever resourceful Wheelers though, their alien captors turned out to be non hostile and, indeed, a bit crap. The spindly little chaps were utterly dependent on a huge energy crystal that had powered their entire planet for a thousand years, and with the crystal now failing, planet Doom was, er, doomed! So, despite being an advanced race who'd developed anti-gravity technology, teleportation and Heaven alone knows how many other marvelous devices, our stumped aliens had kidnapped the Wheelers (whom they regarded as super intelligent) to force them to devise a way of saving them! The aliens were at a bit of a disadvantage, admittedly: they'd lived in enclosed domes subsisting on chemical rations for so long that they'd forgotten what water was, and while they had books dating back to the time when their ancestors had discovered the energy crystal, they weren't allowed to read them as they were sacred relics. Throw in the Zanites, an evil race intent on killing them, and the 'planet people' didn't really have a lot going for them. Well, what else do you expect if you name your planet 'Doom', you Muppets? Luckily, the Wheeler's eventually saved the world and were returned home by the planet people's time machine (!) wondering if the whole adventure had been a dream-though Janet was still holding a broken dial from the time machine!

Crouched behind the rocks, the Wheelers hardly dared breathe. Then suddenly, Patch wriggled from Janet's grasp and bounded toward the planet creatures'
That's torn it!
Patch! Come back!
Eeeaaah! We are being attacked!
We must beam ourselves back to the dome!

IRON HAND (CRACKER, 1975)

(Artist unknown)

Iron Hand was actually British agent 041, first seen in the first issue of DC Thomson's 'Cracker' title. His gimmick? Well, as you might have been able to gather from the title, he had an iron right hand, a bit like IPC's totally dissimilar character, the Steel Claw, who also had an iron right hand. Unlike the Steel Claw though, Iron Hand's iron hand didn't make him invisible-although it could generate electricity, rather like the Steel Claw's steel claw. It also came equipped with a baffling and frankly unlikely array of concealed tools and electrical devices including a flame thrower, a magnet, a saw, and more, many more than could reasonably be fitted into the hand and still leave room for the mechanisms that made it actually work as a hand! Maybe they hollowed out his arm? Iron Hand had everything-a top job, influential friends, even an arch enemy in the shape of crippled criminal genius Otto Lanz, a kind of Bavarian Blofeld. The one thing he seemed to lack, in fact, was a personality.

That and a real name...

THE LOST TEAM FROM ETERNA (HOTSPUR, 1974)

Art by James Bleach

Some football teams just seem dogged by bad luck; I suspect a lot of fans would agree with that. But few could be as unlucky as Sandford City, who were held prisoner in the lost city of Eterna in the South American jungles for twenty years after a plane crash, forced to play for the amusement of the city's ruler! Remarkably well preserved after two decades in the jungle thanks to the powers of a mysterious idol which team captain Jeff Kane periodically used to restore their youth, the team eventually escaped with the idol and returned home to resume their careers-pursued by the Guardian of the idol, who would understandably stop at nothing to get it back .This may actually have been the most unlikely story Hotspur ever ran, and that's saying something ..

The photo strips experiment may have ended after 18 months, but as 1983 drew to a close, Eagle *continued to fly high, now in the same format as other titles, like* 2000AD. ***Tony Ingram*** *concludes his two-part look at ...*

John Wagner and John M Burns gave the new look new Eagle a new star in the shape of Danny Pyke, star of the appropriately titled 'The Fists of Danny Pyke', a very traditional feeling story about a young boxer. Manix and Walk or Die were given the comic strip treatment (House of Correction had already ended in the 27th August issue), as was Doomlord, drawn by Gary Compton in new story 'The Deathlords of Nox' (though his new status as a genuine comic strip hero still couldn't curb his tendency towards casual murder). Later, Eric Bradbury would become the strips regular artist. In addition, we got an imaginative new series in 'The Amstor Computer', in which an unpredictable and occasionally homicidal artificial intelligence, having first murdered its creator, tells a new story each week from its supposed catalogue of a million tales, the week's tale being chosen by a random code number picked by a lucky reader who would win five pounds. The new lineup was well enough received, though it couldn't disguise the fact that the mag was now far inferior in production terms and had less colour, too. The one strip which appears to have benefited from the change was Doomlord, its creators' imaginations now unrestricted by cost limitations (though I still have a soft spot for the photo strip version). Dan Dare's baptism of fire finally ended with the Mekon's capture in the 22nd October issue, though the green meanie would be back by the New Year...

By January '84, the kids from Walk or Die were ready to walk, even as Manix's credibility died as he faced that old chestnut, a clone of Adolf Hitler. Sgt Streetwise made an unwelcome return too, in illustrated form now, but as boring as ever. Luckily, the dreary detective's latest adventure was safely concluded by issue #99, meaning that the mag's 100th issue (18 Feb '84) could celebrate in style with two new stories, 'News Team', best described as the adventures of a Kate Adie substitute and her cohorts trying to cover potentially terminal assignments for a TV news team, and 'the Brothers', an eerie tale about identical twins, one of whom is transformed into a Neanderthal by a radioactive accident. Written by Gerry Finley Day and drawn by Vanyo, the story of the tragic twins is an enjoyable piece of fantasy, and it's a shame Finley Day has since disappeared from the comics scene. Also memorable was Jim Baikie's 'Bloodfang', the everyday story of a Tyrannosaur with troubles. The dinosaur was admittedly difficult to empathise with, but no more so than the still emotionless Manix (in fact, the anodyne android had by now been subverted by agents of SMOG and wasted by his own replacement, though there was little noticeable difference). In August, Danny Pyke bowed out to be replaced by new thriller 'Marathon Man', with Hot Lips, Clobber Gates and the rest of the Crowe Street kids leaving school around the same time, but bigger changes were in store with the 1st September issue (#128; the issue numbers resurfaced with #127) and the coming of 'Eagle & Scream!'. *Scream!*, of course, was a short lived (only 15 issues–see Crikey! 3) title fairly unique in that it specialized in 'horror' stories, complete with its own 'host' in editor Ghastly McNasty. Highly regarded, the title was prematurely cancelled due to an industrial dispute, but of course IPC couldn't allow its loyal readers to get away so the traditional 'merger' occurred, the *Scream!* logo being added to Eagle's masthead and two stories carried over from the defunct mag: 'Monster', the story of a deformed man misunderstood by society (Alan Moore created it, but wrote only the first installment) and 'The 13th Floor'. Max, The 13th Floor's homicidal computer, later became Eagle's supposed 'editor'. Joining the by now almost inevitable Doomlord, Dan Dare, Danny Pyke, Manix, the Amstor Computer and The Brothers (who departed in the same issue, Bob Trent now mercifully cured of his mutation), the new stories quickly became reader favourites.

Issue #129 played something of a trick on the readers. A new story started under the title 'The Time Machine', concerning a greedy conglomerate using time travel technology to plunder Earth's past By the end of the episode though, it was clear that 'The Time Machine' was a red herring, as that Silurian scamp Bloodfang found himself transferred unexpectedly to the 22nd Century, just like 2000AD's satanic Tyrannosaur Old One Eye before him! Sneaky, or what?

Scream! remained a part of the Eagle masthead until issue #153, considerably longer than it had as a comic in its own right, but the title continued to march forward. Well, mostly; after three weeks of teaser trailers issue #138 saw the introduction of the 'Robo Machines', a less than memorable toy tie-in strip designed to capitalize on the then current craze for Transformers and their imitators. On the whole, the machinations of the evil Stron-Domez and his metal minions from Robotron are probably best overlooked. Better by far was 'Gaunt', the story of a secret agent who wore a metal gauntlet over his ruined right hand, driven by a need for revenge on the Nazis who tortured him-yep, for the first time in ages, Eagle had a period story (and thankfully, it wasn't Saddle Tramp). From issue #150-153, lucky readers were also given a free gift, a four part poster printed on the colour centrespread: Doomlord's Alien Data File. Part one detailed several 'factual' sightings of aliens along with artists impressions of what people claimed to have seen, while part two showed stars of big screen 'sightings', including ET, Alien, The Thing, Close Encounters of the Third Time and Darth Vader. Part three was dedicated to small screen aliens including the Daleks, the Tripods and the reptilian stars of 'V', while the final section concentrated n Eagle reader's own sightings of alien life in its pages, namely the Mekon, recent Dan Dare foe Renagol, and our old pal Doomlord's former masters, the Dread Council of Nox (then reappearing in the Doomlord strip itself).

For five weeks, between issues #154 and #158, *Eagle* had its masthead to itself again, IPC having evidently decided *Scream!* would by now have been forgotten. But another merger was on the cards and this time, it was to be one of IPC's longest running titles which would

bulldoze its way into the comic's pages-with Danny Pyke having hung up his gloves, Monster having found peace in the Australian Outback, Bloodfang safely back in the mists of prehistory and Manix and Gaunt safely out of the way, #159 saw the arrival of 'Tiger'! The venerable sports based weekly had been launched in 1954 by Amalgamated Press, and had itself already absorbed 'Comet', 'Hurricane', 'Jag' and most recently 'Speed', as well as spawning its own spin-off title, 'Roy of the Rovers'. Aside from Roy Race, other *Tiger* favourites over its 1555 issues had included Johnny Cougar, Jet Ace Logan, the incomprehensible Hot Shot Hamish and Billy Dane, star of 'Billy's Boots'. Favourites all, but by 1985 the IPC line was fading fast. In the same week that *Tiger* joined *Eagle*, humour titles 'Whizzer & Chips' and 'Whoopee!' also 'joined forces', *Whoopee!* Being absorbed by its longer running sister title after an eleven year run. The unusual thing about the *Eagle/Tiger* merge, however, was that unlike most of the other examples I've given, this really was a merger, not merely a couple of strips from a failed title being shunted into another. The issue numbers vanished from the cover again, and the ratio of *Tiger* to *Eagle* characters in the first merged issue was actually slightly in *Tiger*'s favour despite Eagle coming first in the title: 'Dan Dare', 'Doomlord', 'Robo Machines', 'The 13th Floor', 'Billy's Boots', 'Golden Boy' (about an athlete with the unlikely name of Jamie Speed), 'Star Rider' (about an alien kid hiding on Earth) and 'Ultimate Warrior' (later 'Computer Warrior', basically an ongoing ad for computer firm Commodore) all featured, but probably the best holdover from 'Tiger' was actually a holdover from the late, lamented 'Speed' comic, the excellent 'Death Wish'. For the uninitiated, Blake Edmonds, the man with the death wish, first showed his then handsome face in the first issue of 'Speed' in February 1980, but it didn't stay handsome for long. Hideously disfigured in an accident, Formula 1 star Blake wound up resembling a piece of Kentucky Fried Chicken, a deformity he concealed under a metal mask which would nonetheless regularly slip off at inconvenient moments, frightening the life out of anyone in the vicinity. Devastated at not being pretty anymore, Blake announced to the world that he would perform any stunt devised for him-the more dangerous the better-for big money, in the hope that he wouldn't survive the attempt. Needless to say, barbecued Blake was too good at the daredevil business to actually achieve his ambition, and instead found himself a reluctant celebrity and all round hero >

RIGHT: THRILLS AND SPILLS WITH THE NEWS TEAM' (ART BY ORTIZ)

despite his frequent bouts of self pity. An instant hit with readers, Blake outlasted *Speed*'s 31 issue run and spent the next few years risking life and charbroiled limb in Tiger before ending up in Eagle for the duration. Suicide may indeed be painless, as the theme song from MASH constantly asserted, but if the readers like you, it can be damn near impossible to commit!

The first combined issue gave readers a kind of 'primer' episode of each story for those unfamiliar with them, which was especially handy in the case of Doomlord, as the installment ended with a young doctor inadvertently releasing a sample of bacteria taken from the corpse of Howard Harvey, the original Doomlord's last victim. Predictably, the following week saw hapless research scientist David Mason possessed by the ever homicidal Servitor Zyn, resurrected to continue his mission! Cue the battle of the Doomlords as Vek was forced to battle his predecessor for the survival of humanity. Fortunately for humanity, the now publicly feted Vek (by now actually working with the authorities quite amicably) won the battle, though it did take him sixteen weeks! We also learned, courtesy of Mrs. Souster, that Vek had become a devotee of Coronation Street.

The soap opera antics of Weatherfield's finest clearly awakened a need for family in Servitor Vek, as following Zyn's death he went on to clone himself a son, Enok, a decision which would later come back to haunt him when he learned just how unpleasant kids can be. Meanwhile, Dan Dare met his very own Digby, the great grandson of the original, and the Robo Machines were replaced by 'Shadow', a strip about a police dog traumatized by the death of his handler. Aww, poor doggie. Despite the uninspired premise though, Mike Western's art makes this last strip stand out. *Eagle* appears to have become slightly obsessed with spies and secret agents at this point. Issue #185 (the issue numbers had returned yet again with #163) saw the Golden Boy returned to the wilderness to be replaced by the agents of the elite anti-terrorist *Special Operations Squad*, in 'SOS' (a strip originally seen in the pages of 'Battle'). Simultaneously, Blake Edmonds had embarked on a career as a secret agent in 'Death Wish', while mad computer Max got a part time job as an MI5 agent (while still managing to run a department store) in 'The 13th Floor'. Fortunately for the world of espionage, neither of these latter situations lasted, and Blake was soon happily trying to kill himself on his own time again while Max was reinstalled in the Maxwell Tower torturing troublesome tenants, always his favourite occupation.

January 1986 saw Eagle celebrate its 200th issue as Doomlord faced the Firelords of Nox, sent to punish him for creating a half human/half Noxian clone in the annoying Enok, while Shadow the super dog found a new home at last (thanks, Dog's Trust) to be replaced by DADD ('Dial a Dawn Destructor'), a ludicrous tale about a rock band moonlighting as vigilantes for hire. Eagle had more than a few rather embarrassing stories in its history but DADD, starring 'Dawn Destruction' members Big Chew Charlie, Missy Troll, Girl Pete and Iceberg Slim Rodell, and written by someone (understandably uncredited) whose idea of modern slang was at least twenty years out of date was truly awful. Fortunately, the unhip crime-busters were gone by issue #216, but their departure had less to do with the quality of the strip than with the ongoing need to cut costs. More reprint material began to appear, and sadly not all of it was of the calibre of One Eyed Jack. Things must have been desperate if they had to resort to inflicting 2000Ads early clunker 'Ant Wars' on a new generation! Still, Eagle could still serve up a few surprises when it wanted to: one surprise more memorable than most came when, courtesy of Tom Tully and Ian Kennedy, the original Dan Dare was plucked out of the past by the Mekon as part of a crazed revenge scheme, and wound up teaming up with his own great grandson! Despite the obvious dangers to the timestream, Dan and Dan had a ball fighting side by side in a lethal mechanized amusement park reminiscent of classic SF movie Westworld

ONE-EYED JACK
SKY FORCE BASE
IT'S AS QUIET AS A GRAVEYARD NURSEMAID TO THAT HARDWARE ISN'T MY IDEA OF FUN, McBAIN'S
QUIT BEEFIN' AFTER THIS BABY'S LAUNCHED TOMORROW WE'LL HEAD FOR HOLLYWOOD AND HIT US BOMB HIGH SPOTS
THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE EXPERIMENTAL BASE AT SAN PEDROS, CALIFORNIA, GUARDING THE PROTOTYPE OF A HIGH ALTITUDE RAMJET CONTROLLED RECONNAISSANCE AIRCRAFT WERE MILITARY INTELLIGENCE AGENTS JACK McBANE AND DAN STEWART
SUDDENLY
INTRUDER— WITH A FLAME-THROWER
DOWN
HECK, THAT WAS CLOSE NOW THE PUNK'S HEADING FOR SKY-PROBE 1
HE'VE GOT TO STOP HIM!
TOO LATE THE FUEL TANKS HAVE BLOWN, HE'S GOT TO BE AN A.R.M. RAIDER
HOLE IN THE PERIMETER FENCE—WE'LL A GETAWAY CAR PARK OUTSIDE
WE'VE GOT WHEELS TOO, LET'S
THE ARMY OF REVOLUTIONARIES AN UNDERGROUND ORGANISATION DEDICATED TO THE OVERTHROW OF THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT
The all-powerful Alien was marooned on Earth — the planet whose people he had been ordered to destroy!
DOOMLORD
THE DEATHLORDS OF NOX HAD COME TO EARTH TO EXECUTE DOOMLORD VEK FOR REFUSING TO DESTROY THE HUMAN RACE NOW IN A POWERED NIGHT TIME STREET.
EAGLE
AUTHOR: GRANT MORRISON ARTIST: MIKE WESTERN
WARP NO.
THE DEATHLORDS ARE DIS INTEGRATING EVERYONE IN AN ATTEMPT TO KILL ME!
CANNOT ALLOW THAT TO HAPPEN!
IT BROUGHT YOU TO US DOOMLORD NOW - DIE!
SHIELDING
AGH!
TOO MANY HUMANS ARE DYING NEEDLESSLY MUST DRAW THE ASSASSINS AWAY FROM HERE - AT ONCE
FIRELORDS TRUE QUARRY ARE / STOP ENDLESS BICKERING
HE'S TELEPORTING AGAIN
WE WILL FOLLOW MON TOR H'S ENERGY PULSE
WE MATERIALISED SOME MILES AWAY OVER A BUSY MOTORWAY —

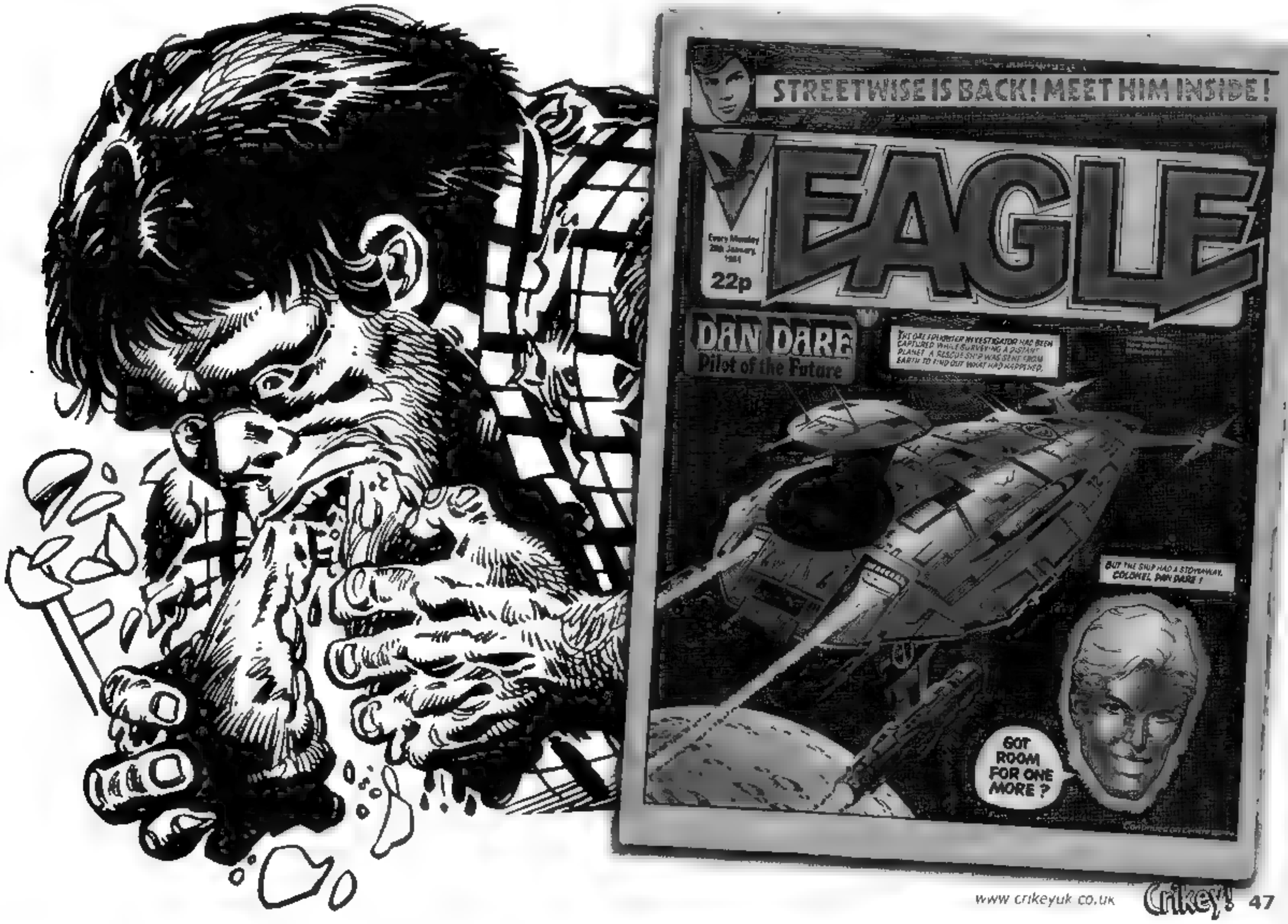
in one of the series' most innovative stories. Meanwhile, Death Wish, Doomlord, the surprisingly rather good after all Computer warrior and the rest, including strange new SF story 'Legend of the Linkits' about a world of geometry obsessed droids, continued to alternately thrill and bemuse.

Tiger' vanished from the masthead after issue #221, a sad day after over thirty years on the newsagents shelves, even as new story 'Dolebusters' began, about a group of school leavers setting themselves up as 'entrepreneurs', a premise that was no doubt intended to be inspiring at a time when unemployment was high in Thatcher's Britain. Crazed computer Max was back in the espionage game by spring '86, having sent his little helper 'Minimax' to Russia, leading to a hilarious conversation between Max and a Russkie computer (both having taken humanoid form). Our loony artificial intelligence proudly proclaims 'I may have a few Japanese chips, but I'm British through and through!' Whatever else you might say about it, *Eagle* was still inventive: Max's misdemeanors, Doomlord's family problems (Enok was by now trying to kill his dear old dad) and the ongoing trials of the two Dan's proved that, though the real highlight of the Dare strip at this time (for me, anyway) was Dan senior's dated dialogue. Sadly, he was returned to his own time in issue #229, and

things returned to relative normalcy for Dan junior.

Ant Wars ended in #231, but the reprint hell had only just begun, the next issue seeing the arrival of another *2000AD* star of yesteryear, MACH One; later, MACH Zero would be along, too. New stories did continue to appear, notably 'Comrade Bronski' (about a Russian spy) and 'Survival' (about a boy left alone in the world after a global catastrophe), both of which debuted in #259. But neither these nor classy British superhero 'The Avenger' nor even a new and glossy look in March 1987 could pull *Eagle* back from the slippery slope it was now on, along with most other British comics at the time. IPC tried various stunts to keep it's profile high (one of the oddest being the sudden abandonment of the new Dan Dare in October 1989, in favour of new adventures of his great granddad by original *Eagle* artist Keith Watson) but ultimately nothing could stop *Eagle* from first being forced to go to monthly status in May 1991, and finally ceasing publication altogether in January 1994. Admittedly, it had outlasted most of IPC's other titles regardless, having absorbed 'Battle' in January '88, 'MASK' in October of the same year and 'Wildcat' in April '89, and there had been a few worthwhile additions to the roster in that time, including 'Rat Trap', 'Mask of Evil', Eric Bradbury's 'Ghost World' and 'Beast' and Solano Lopez's 'Dark Angels', and of course several holdovers from the various merged titles including 'Charley's War', 'Johnny Red', 'Loner' and 'Storm Force'. But by the time of the re-launch as a monthly, most of the strips were reprints and few really seemed to notice when it folded. The day of the traditional British boy's comic was effectively over, but it's fitting all the same that Eagle, the title which in both incarnations had done so much for the medium, was among the last to go. And Dan Dare, Doomlord and Co are far from forgotten even now. Will the Eagle ever fly again? We can but live in hope... ●

BELOW, LEFT: BOB TRENT'S TABLE MANNERS NEED A BIT OF WORK IN THE BROTHERS' (ART BY VANYO)


STREETWISE IS BACK! MEET HIM INSIDE!
EAGLE
22p
DAN DARE
Pilot of the Future
BUT THE SHIP HAD A STOWAWAY, COLONEL DAN DARE!
GOT ROOM FOR ONE MORE?

For future issues of ***Crikey!*** *let us know what you think about our magazine, British comics, your reactions to features or simply make us laugh*
Our address is: ***Crikey!*** *13 Rosethorns Close, Gladewood, Middleton, Manchester. M24 6TP*
Or simply contact us through the website : www.crikeyuk.co.uk

IT'S YOUR LETTERS!

MRS BILL RITCHIE

As has been pointed out by several people, the winner of our first competition was the late Bill Ritchie. First of all I'd like to apologise for any upset caused to Mrs Ritchie and hope the arrival of the winning prize didn't offend her in any way. It was an oversight on my part. We had many entries and Bill's was obviously still in there when the draw was made. I still didn't make the connection following the draw - but if I had noticed it, I would still have sent Mrs Ritchie the prize as, in all fairness, Bill had won it. Again apologies for any upset the draw may have caused.

Dear Crikey!
Just a thank you for my runner Up Prize in your first competition of Frank Bellamy's King Arthur and his Knights. It came today and what a Prize! Thank you very much!
Yours sincerely
Cyril F Gittings
Cheshire

Dear Glenn
Just a few lines to thwank you for my competition prize of 'King Artheur and his Knights' by Frank Bellamy. It came as a complete surprise since I had all but forgotten abouut the competition. I already have the companion publication 'Robin Hood' and was so glad to add it to my collection glad I hadn't purchased it already!

May I also take this opportunity to say that I was sorry to hear of your problems regarding distribution of *Crikey!* magazine concerned with Borders collapse. It is a pity that this set back has occurred when the magazine was progressing splendidly and much has been acheived over the past couple of years. Hopefully by now some of these problems have been overcome and the magazine will continue successfully. I look forward to hearing the same in the next issue.

Thanks again for the prize, and best wishes for the future.
David Farnworth
Bolton

You're both very welcome, Cyril and David! Glad you enjoyed the Bellamy work! Keep buying Crikey! *as we hope to be running more competitions in the future*

Crikey!
One of the reasons I continue to buy and enjoy crikey! is the sheer diversity of topics on offer. As a small boy I used to wait patiently for my Dad to finish with our local evening paper so I could digest the latest adventures of Lee Falk's *Phantom*. As I grew old enough to receive pocket money I made sure my newsagent put aside the *Topper* and *Beano* for me

When I had matured enough to run around my street with a stick in my hand machine gunning invisible German Stormtroopers who were usually hiding at the top of our lamp posts I read and kept the *Hornet*, *Hotspur* and *Valiant*.

I 'came back' to comics in my thirties and was always after the elusive perfect read. In my head there was a comic out there somewhere that was a 'must read' and every page was printed solely to satisfy my tastes.

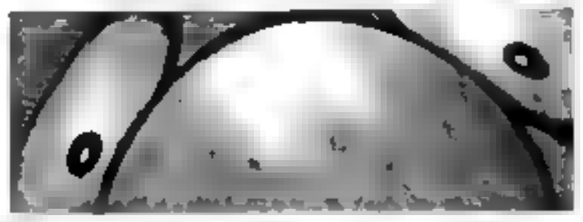
I discovered there was no such animal and that every comic or magazine had ts highs and lows and it is the sheer diversity of ideas available that makes reading them so enjoyable!

So now, well into my fift.es, I settle down to read *Crikey!*, *Classics from the Comics*, *The Lone Ranger*, *Green Hornet*, *Little Plum* and anything e'se that tickles my fancy!

Thanks for a great read!
Yours sincerely,
Don Cooper
email

Crikey!
Congratulations on a great magazine. I only became aware of *Crikey!* earlier this year, so am gradually collecting the back issues

The website asks for suggestions for articles and one artist that I fondly remember is Patrick Wright, the artist behind the Mike Nelson *Eagle* stories in *Battle* and a contributor to *House of Hammer*. He had a very realistic style and seemed to specialise in WW2



stories, but perhaps it is because I usually bought war themed comics!

I'm not even sure if he is still alive, but I remember Dez Skinn telling me that Patrick became disillusioned with drawing comics. It would be great to have a feature/Interview with him. Other articles I would like to see are features on *Action* and *Warlord*–any chance?

I'm sure that you have already received requests for features on artists such as John Bolton, Brian Bolland and Brian Lewis, who I first knowingly encountered in the excellent *House of Hammer* magazine. I was privileged to interview Dez about *House of Hammer* magazine for a Hammer horror magazine called Dark Terrors many years ago. A great bloke as you probably know

Finally I'm not sure that I can contribute to the comic Saturday feature, as it always frustrated me that my comics were delivered on a Monday, despite them been available on the newsstand on a Saturday! Being a canny Yorkshire man/boy I soon realised that if the comics were part of the weekly newspaper order my Dad would pay for the comics, but the price I'd have to pay is having to wait until Monday to read them!

Kind Regards and keep up the good work.
Gary Logan, email

We ran an extensive interview with Dez in issue 11, Gary and published an article about House of Horror *in issue 3. Crikey! 4 featured an article by Mike Morley on* Eerie, The Haunted Fear *among others. We covered* Warlord *in issue 6. All these issues are still available for you to buy. Check out the website for details and get those issues!*

Hi Glenn
Thanks for *Crikey!* 13 and 14. I had got this typed up after 13 arrived but it got left in my drafts! I am sorry to hear about the distribution problems–I am a credit manager by trade and could see this one coming.

God knows what is left now–Borders at least had a magazine section that had variety and unusual magazines. WH Smith is just so tired and full of piles of

Tributes to Peter O'Donnell

A genuine talent, he had a huge impact on comic art with his unique style of writing and it is unfortunate that in the main he didn't get the credit he deserved
Bill McGoughlin, DC Thomson & Co., Ltd

Peter O'Donnell was respected as one of the greatest writers in the comics medium today and had a devout following amongst comics professionals and fans alike. I am honoured to have known him.
Nick Landau, Titan Books

Peter O'Donnell was the last great creator and writer of the story strip and a fine novelist. Modesty Blaise will endure as one of the great characters of adventure fiction and her comic strip as one of the best story strips ever done. O'Donnell enriched our lives immeasurably and his loss is deeply felt.
Roger Clark, Carol-Day.com

It's always sad news to hear of anyone passing but when it is someone like Peter who has entertained countless readers with his work, the announcement comes with a moment of reflection. Today comics and comic strip characters are finally being given the recognition they so rightfully deserve and this isn't just because we the fans have championed them, but because there were pioneers out there pushing these characters forward. Without talented people like Peter O'Donnell our world would lack the intriguing stories and environments to escape to when our own world gets us down and so for that we shall always be thankful.
Alex Wiggan, Crikey! columnist

Peter O'Donnell was probably the best comic strip-writer of his generation and his closer than siblings relationship between his famous heroine Modesty Blaise and the charismatic Willie Garvin must be unique in modern literature. As a prose writer O'Donnell was inventive and always entertaining with both his Modesty series and his historical romances – these written under a nom-de-plume, Madeleine Brent - being popular and much read. But it was his scripts for Tug Transom, Romeo Brown, Garth and most notably Modesty Blaise that brought him great success and a devoted cult following amongst strip fans. O'Donnell developed the ability to leave each days episode on an upbeat, capturing the readers interest and drawing him into the next episode without causing any faltering in storyline. A rare talent. Loyalty to his artists, especially Jim Holdaway and later Romero led to fine working relationships and a body of work that seems timeless. Thank you Peter, you will be greatly missed.
Dave Westaway, publisher

While best remembered for Modesty Blaize, Peter O'Donnell had already established a reputation for writing successful strip features, long before the exploits of the alluring adventuress first appeared in the London Evening Standard in 1963. Having started out, in the mid-1930s, at the Amalgamated Press on their juvenile titles, Butterfly, Comic Cuts and Illustrated Chips; the war then interrupted his career with service in the Royal Signal Corps.

Demobbed in 1946, he returned to work in publishing and, in 1952, was invited to script Belinda for the Daily Mirror; soon after, he also took on writing the Garth strip. Later, in 1954 for the rival Daily Sketch, he created the sea-faring adventurer, Tug Transom, convincingly brought to life by Alfred Sindall. The light-comedy strip, Romeo Brown, for the Daily Mirror followed in 1957, first drawn by Alfred Mazure and then Jim Holdaway, who was to partner the author in his runaway success with Modesty Blaize.

Part of the attraction of all these strips, was that the characters seemed to lead believable lives, visit recognisable places, get into plausible scrapes and then escape the consequences by dint of their own ingenuity - — or, perhaps, Peter O'Donnell's imagination.
He really was the tops!
David A Roach 2010, artist

I first met Peter O'Donnell when I took on a small studio over El Vinos (a well known wine bar in Fleet Street). We became great friends lasting over 30 years, until the lights finally went out on the street of great adventure. He was my landlord, subletting me a small studio next to his large office at the very top of five flights of stairs. I could always hear the tapping of his typewriter as he clattered out the latest storyline from a Modesty Blaise adventure. He would sit from nine to five daily, smartly dressed in a tailored suit, beneath a cloud of smoke he blew from a cigarette in a black holder, breaking his thoughts just for an hour at lunchtime with a sandwich and a cup of tea from an antique teapot. For such a serious man, he had a great sense of the ridiculous We both laughed a lot over the years - I will miss that.
Peter Maddocks, cartoonist, 2010

Peter O'Donnell was a great writer and quite influential - writing Garth at times, and creating both Romeo Brown and Modesty Blaise as well as umpteen novels. It's a great pity they never did a decent film about Modesty - the Monica Viti film was too camp and Viti only wore the Modesty costume for a couple of seconds. His choice of Jim Holdaway for the Modesty strip was just right - even now, the strip has barely aged and still looks up-to-date. I'm a fan of Frank Hampson (who tried out for the strip), but Frank's art looks very dated by comparison.
John Ridgway, artist

multi-coloured kid's comics–unless of course you can liven it up with the addition of *Crikey!*

Anyhow, if you need such a thing, this note is just to register my ongoing support for your marvellous magazine. To be honest, I'd be happy as Larry with a 52 page b&w version in these comic-related-magazine-starved-times and heaven knows why FP isn't stocking. I don't get much in the way of new comics unless I read a review or get a recommendation and always go straight to the comic related stuff in comic shops rather than the comics themselves. So I just don't understand why some retailers don't focus on people like me as they would 'normal' comic buyers. I like reading about comics probably more than I like reading new comics these days.

On that note, would you ever consider fanzine reviews or recommendations? I'd love to know what is being published.

Whilst writing, I'd also just like to say that the Rupert article in #14 was a really great read and I enjoyed the style of writing. I hope that there is more writing coming from Jody.

Finally, promise me you won't stop doing *Crikey!* It's brilliant, something I look forward to and it keeps me entertained!!

Cheers

Mike Burnett

email

Thanks Mike–and a double whammy from you this issue: a letter and an article! FP still seem to think we're a 'fanzine' and they don't stock fanzines. As far as I'm concerned, Crikey! *has never been a fanzine. We've never regarded it as one and there is also a clue every issue on the cover - The Great British Comics* Magazine. *We can only hope they see this and stock us, but it's out of our hands, I'm afraid (though there's nothing to stop our readers from pointing out their error when they're next in their local branch of FP). I would consider reviewing any 'fanzines', yes-based on merit. As for your final point, the only reason* Crikey! *is not in WH Smith is purely financial. It costs a lot of money to place a magazine (there's that word again) in any mainstream outlet and I'm afraid the Borders debacle almost closed us down. The only way we could look at that at the moment is if we get massive financial input. We'd need a good £12,000 we don't currently have to get past the front door. Any billionaires out there wish to invest?!*

That's it for this issue. Keep your letters coming and we'll talk again ... pretty soon!

WHERE IN THE WORLD...?

Ian Phillip Snell took his issue of Crikey! with him to help pass the hours on the long haul flight to Japan (top, right). So here is a picture of Crikey!, *Hannah and Ian at one of the temples in Tokyo!*

Andi Lau (centre) recently visited Times Square and the Statue of Liberty with his copy of Crikey! *1. Er, Andi - we've published fourteen copies since then!*

Karol Wisniewski (bottom left) and his pal Jacub (right) fly the Crikey! *flag in their native Poland. Karol is Editor in Chief of 'New British Comics' (reviewed last issue). For more information regarding his publication contact Karol on karolwisnia@gmail.com*

Keep those photos coming!

THE Crikey! REVIEW

Forty-Five: Written by Andi Ewington
Art: various Publisher: Com.X Ltd

More often than not, in comics, good art gets trampled on by too much text or the text gets squeezed out by too much art. It isn't always the marriage made in Heaven we would like to think it is. And sometimes, we over look this fault in our 'happy' medium and allow the art and the text to duke it out. Then bitch about why mediocre comics get published.

But along comes Com.x with Forty-Five and a change of format that gives the best of both worlds without any compromise.

The art has it's own page and so does the text.

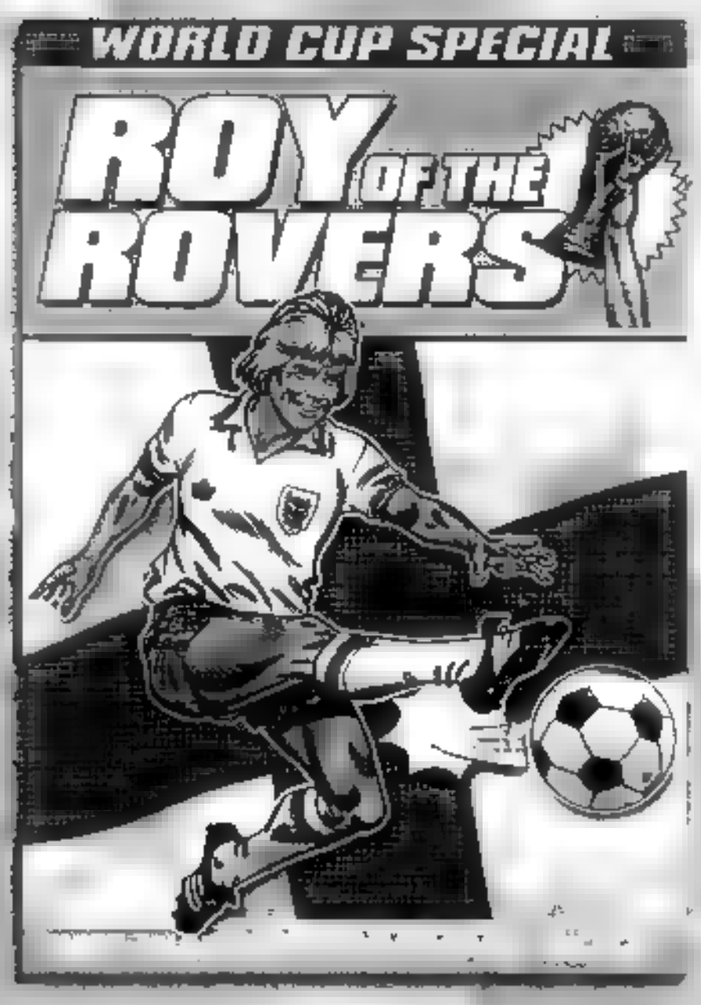
The result, because Ewington can write great prose and create a believable world, where parents might give birth to child who is a superhero, is stunning and original in its simplicity.

The art has breathing space, appreciation space. It feels like each page is not dissimilar to wandering through the National Gallery. And with Brit artists like Bob Wiacek, John Higgins and Neil Edwards, amongst a plethora of notable others, Forty-Five pages hold the best of the best.

I applaud Com.x for publishing a 'game changer'.

Aren't word balloons becoming old hat?

Recommended.
Stephen Hooker May 2010



Roy of the Rovers: World Cup Special
Introduction by Gary Lineker
Publisher: Titan Books

Another bumper offering of everybody's favourite footballer from Titan, treating us to a selection of Roy's International and World Cup adventures. Roy and his Rovers are also seen 'down under' (Roy finding a long lost uncle into the bargain) pitting their wits and skills against Italians, Bulgarians not to mention a team of native Australians! Another international trip to South America sees Roy playing for England against Brazil, with the usual skull-duggery between games. Football legends Trevor Francis and Malcolm MacDonald also feature alongside Roy.

If that isn't enough, you'll also find great pin-ups of England World Cup greats such as Bobby Moore, Gordon Banks, '66 hat-trick hero Geoff Hurst, Francis Lee, Martin Peters and Alan Ball. Roy meets 70s Scottish international midfielder Bruce Rioch and, to top it all, there is a fabulous 6 page strip featuring England's glorious victory of 1966.

It's pure Roy!

Recommended.
Glenn B Fleming May 2010

Captain Britain: the Siege of Camelot
Alan Moore, Alan Davies, Steve Parkhouse, John Stokes,
Paul Neary & David Thorpe
Publisher: Panini

The fourth book in the ongoing series of Captain Britain trade paperbacks from Panini, is finally available this month (it was originally due last November) and it was well worth waiting for!

It totals 258 pages of home grown superhero action, including the remaining episodes of Steve Parkhouse and John Stokes's epic 'Black Knight' saga from Hulk Comic (never before reprinted!), plus material by Dave Thorpe, Alan Moore and Alan Davis from Marvel Superheroes and The Daredevils.

Admittedly, I'm not sure why Thorpe's stuff is in black & white while Moore's is in colour, (given that all of it has previously been colourised for the US market) but it's still great stuff-and for the historians among us, there are a couple of quite revealing forewords by Parkhouse and Thorpe too, as well as a text piece by Alan Moore, originally from Marvel superheroes #389.

Recommended.
Tony Ingram May 2010

Peter Maddocks is one of Britain's most successful cartoonists. With a career spanning over half a century we figured he must have a story to tell. ***Glenn B Fleming*** *tracked Peter down to his adopted home–the beautiful Andalucian city of Malaga, Spain...*

PETER MADDOCKS SPEAKS!

Crikey!: *So-you were born on April the first? That must prompt some comments.*

Peter Maddocks: Being born on April the first is an advantage–people never forget your birthday! And finding out that you are a cartoonist born on that date always say–ah well–that explains everything!

C: *Do you miss cartooning? What caused you to stop?*

PM: Having retired–or should I say been driven into retirement because of my age–plus newspapers being feminized–humor was dumped for gossip columns or celeb culture and the cartoon pages and the cartoons started to get smaller and smaller.

C: *I can't believe you don't turn out the odd doodle from time to time. Like every day...every hour...every minute...*

PM: I've learned to stop always thinking of a cartoon gag now, and so many cartoon characters are walking our streets these days you have no need to make them up or draw them, just use a camera!

C: *Is the art of cartooning dying?*

PM: I had the golden years of newspaper cartoon illustration and am very grateful for it–animation is taking over now–computer animation rules–Brilliant as it is, I still prefer hand drawn two dimensional Tom and Jerry type animation–I am convinced that it will come back one day..

C: *As an artist myself, I would suspect that your work just about fills your every moment; noticing the light falling on a building, a tree or a car...we never give up...*

PM: I paint and draw anything and everything and still get great pleasure out of it. Even in my old age I will not let a day go by without I have justified the day by producing something even just a thumbnail sketch or an idea for a future painting will put me to bed content. I remember during my Fleet Street days as a freelance cartoonist I worked all my daylight hours and always considered my eight sleeping hours a waste.

C: *That kind of dedication must have made you worth your weight in gold to your publishers.*

PM: I took my life as a cartoonist very seriously–to me it was everything, holidays were a bore, my poor wife would watch me mooch about walking up and down anywhere but the beach, passing away time until I could return to my drawing board in Fleet Street.

As a result of my graft I was in almost every publication. Much to the dismay of my fellow cartoonists–I was also producing books and thinking about animation.

HATCH

TO BE CONTINUED...

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C: *Even your signature is unique...*

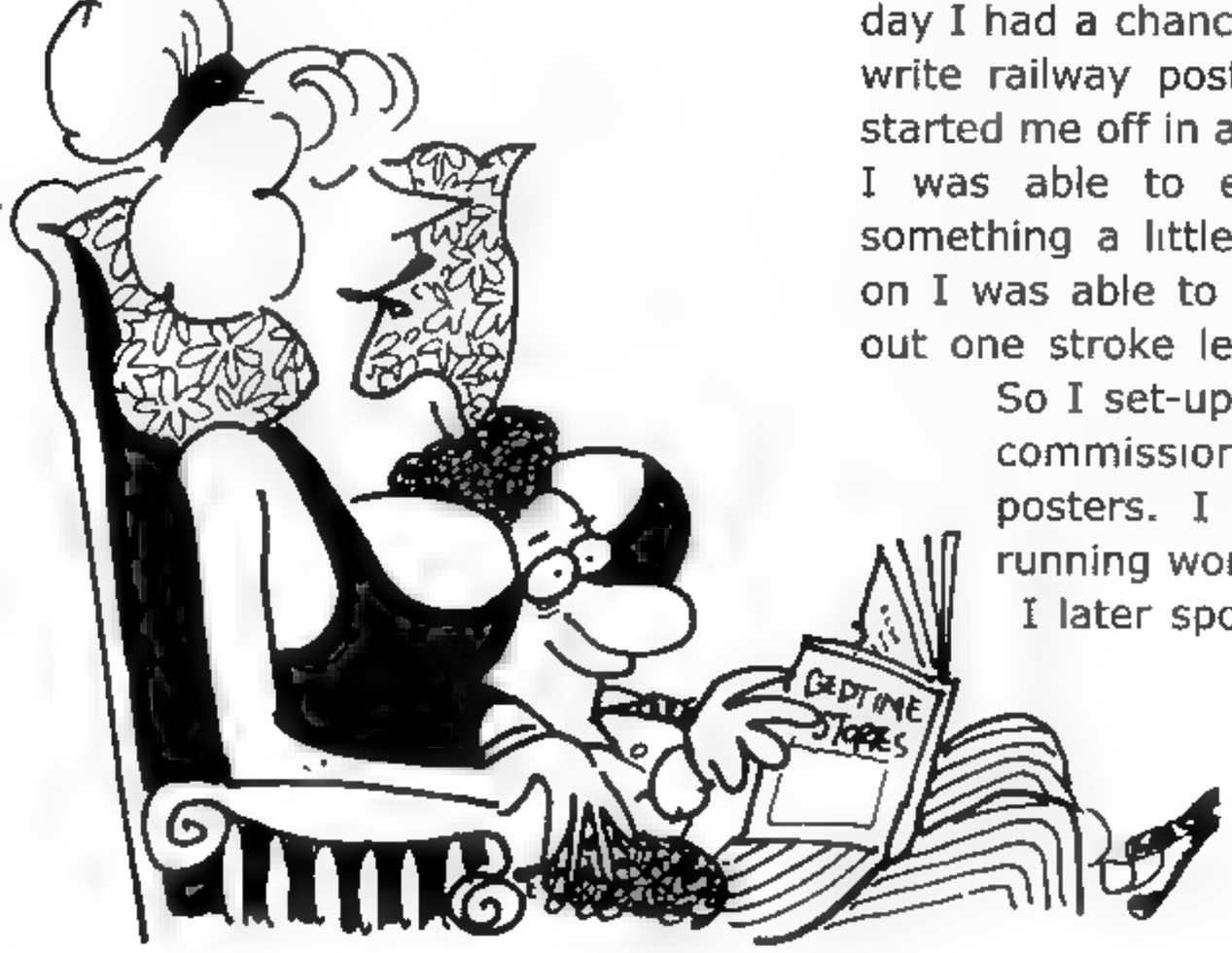
PM: My signature of course was everywhere, so I made sure it was distinctive, bold as brass. To this day people say 'oh yes' I recognize that signature! (job done).

C: *You were taught by the great Norman Pett, weren't you? That must have been amazing-and tuition like that must have been very valuable to you later on.*

PM: I won a scholarship at the age of eleven for my drawing (not interested in anything else) and thanks to my teacher a Mr Webb of St Peter's School Harbourne Birmingham, he got me into the Mosely School of Art–there we had among other teachers Norman Pett who those days also drew *Jane* from the *Daily Mirror*. He would set us a task (drawing daffodils in a milk bottle) then return to his desk chain smoking and drawing naked ladies (how much better it would have been the other way round). However, it gave me an insight into the world of cartooning. I discovered that instead of sitting at a blank paper wondering what to draw, an idea for a gag immediately put an illustration into your head, no need to stare at daffodils, ideas turned into pictures–magic.

C: *After four years at the Mosely School I understand you went to sea- at a point when life expectancy for a sailor couldn't have been great!*

PM: When I left school (it was during the war years) I joined the Merchant Navy and sailed the world for five years) my greatest years of education and survival ever. I saw and remembered everything; I kept up my drawing by drawing ships mates wives and girlfriends from photographs. I was on every kind of ship and nationality. I even finished the war in Hoboken, New Jersey, USA. Just in time to celebrate VJ night in Time Square New York.



C: *And then at the age of 21 you started your own business. What happened next?*

PM: When I finally came ashore I did all the usual jobs, labouring, petrol pump attendant etc., until one day I had a chance to use a brush to write railway posters by hand. This started me off in a different direction. I was able to earn money doing something a little artistic from then on I was able to be slick at turning out one stroke lettering pretty fast.

So I set-up in a shed and got commissions writing cinema posters. I was now up and running working for myself.

I later spotted an add in the Birmingham Mail cartoonists and animators wanted it said. The following day I applied and met a fellow wannabe called Terry Parkes (Larry) he was one step ahead of me having had a cartoon published in *Punch* magazine; however we both got a job and spent six months wasting our time on a drawing board with a man who hadn't got a clue about cartooning or animation. He somehow had got money to make animated films without any knowledge of the subject or business acumen and Larry and I decided to give it all a miss and try our luck in London–Fleet Street here we come!

Larry and I arrived in London and headed for Fleet Street armed with a batch of artwork each both determined to get work on one of the newspapers. We met with a man called Anthony Brandt who was an Agent for artists and writers. He liked both our work and said he would like to represent us by showing our work around the editors–Great!–after a week or so Larry got homesick for his young wife and claimed he preferred Birmingham to London and left. I shopped around and got myself work at Amalgamated Press writing stories for the *Kit Carson* Western series of comic books–The editor said my >

drawing was too cartoony and I should stick to writing, so I did at six guineas a story.

Meanwhile, Anthony Brandt got me an interview with Julian Phipps the cartoon editor of the *Daily Sketch*; he liked my work and said if I submitted cartoons, he would use them. Fantastic! So I did, I worked my socks off writing and drawing cartoons. Eventually Julian Phipps let me use a desk in the office of the *Daily Sketch*, and I produced three and four column cartoons daily, I was a Fleet Street cartoonist earning real money in a National newspaper.

I worked hard on the *Daily Sketch* and enjoyed every minute of it and made good friends there. (Dick Millington who to this day produces a daily strip in the *Daily Mail*) and many others. I soon got fed up with the Amalgamated Press writing as the editor refused to let me draw (after all he had the superb Ron Embleton so I could understand his doubts about my type of artwork). However, I had other ideas, I was a huge fan of the Goons on the radio and I suggested it would make a great cartoon for the *Sketch*–Julian Phipps became very interested and contacted Spike Milligan about giving permission and writing a script. I went to the Goon Show rehearsals and met Harry Secombe and Peter Sellers. Sellers was very enthusiastic and we sat together drawing some of the characters, like Bludnock and Morriarty. I drew up some strips to show the famous three, all was going well until the *Daily Star* and Spike couldn't agree on a contract, I never did find out what happened but the idea fell through.

It was then that, having found the knack of drawing strip cartoons, I decided draw and write one of my own. It started out as an idea for a comic cowboy strip called 'Shame of the West' (the film *Shane* had been a big movie hit around at that time with Alan Ladd), and so as not to bore everyone with the same cowboy old plot, I struck on the idea of giving the useless sheriff a black hoop of the fourth dimension. This came from the eclipse of the sun one day and when it got to total blackout the black spot slipped and fell to earth only to be found and picked up by Four D Jones, the sheriff of Buzzards Creek, who discovered he could climb into it and travel backwards and forwards in time (this was well before *Doctor Who*). The first episode he went forward into 1984; this was in 1955. By now Julian Phipps had had enough of my going on about strip cartoons, so I had to find interest elsewhere.

I drew about fourteen strips of *Four D Jones* complete with dialogue and telephoned the *Daily Express* and got an interview with Arthur Christiansen the great editor (he was in the film *The Day the World Caught Fire*) he studied my fourteen strips and asked to see a synopsis of future stories. I told him I would make it up as I went along and briefly told him what ideas I had in mind, and he said OK you can start daily from next Monday, I will give you ten weeks to show me what you can do. The strip lasted ten years!

On about the second year Arthur Chrstiansen was taken seriously ill and was replaced by a new editor. This one took a dislike to me and *Four D Jones* claiming its content did not belong in a Conservative newspaper. (Those days I was a bit left wing with more than a touch of anarchic humor), so he stopped it in mid story.

Days passed and the phones at the *Express* started ringing more that usual, asking what had happened to the *Four D Jones* strip cartoon? After a week or so it got worse, you couldn't pick up a phone without 'where the hell is it?', then the cartoonist Keith Waite did a four column cartoon in a rival newspaper (*The Daily Sketch*) showing a smiling Four D Jones with his feet up on the Express editor's desk–Oops!! I was called upstairs to the executive offices at the Express and asked if I would like to be cartoon editor of Beaverbrook newspapers? Yes please I said and I got a desk and a telephone but unfortunately for that executive office the phone calls continued followed by letters and even telegrams, so *Four D*

Jones had to be reinstated into its usual place. So now, with two contacts and a good increase financially I had two jobs to perform at the Daily Express.

As cartoon editor I was asked to find an artist for a new strip cartoon feature based on books written by a man called Ian Fleming. An adventure strip called *James Bond* (long before the first Bond film). After many interviews with artists I came up with John McLusky who got the job and could now claim to be the first man to give James Bond a face. The strip appeared in the *Express* and eventually wound up after the films became so successful. However, along with a gag strip called the Zanies I justified my job as cartoon editor and worked out my contract–Happy Days!!

I still have a great affection for *Four D Jones* I was able to both draw and write many adventures and ten years of it daily got it out of my system. I survived four editors but the fifth one got me because by then the strip had run its course, so poor Four D was struck by lightning from above while crossing a rope bridge over a canyon–end of story.

I met a man called Ted Simon who said he was going to produce a magazine, Britain's answer to Playboy–his words, not mine–and would I like to be special features editor with responsibility for the cartoons. Ted had been an executive on the *Daily Mail* so he knew how to put a magazine together. *King Magazine* was launched with interesting features for men plus even more interesting girls (very tame compared to today's stuff). The magazine had a good run and was then taken over and became *Mayfair* magazine, which became a top seller. Ted Simon took off on his motorbike around the world and produced a best selling book. As for me, I was busy drawing cartoons for as many publications as would publish me. I did well in *Private Eye* before they changed the editor, city drawings for the *Telegraph*, sports cartoons for the *London Evening Standard Cop Shop*, *Horatio Cringe*, *Slightly Maddocks* in the *Evening News* and many more.

One day I was leaving my small studio over *El Vinos* (a famous wine bar in Fleet Street) when I met a cartoon editor from the *Daily Mirror*. "Peter", he said, "how would you like to draw *Useless Eustace* in the *Daily Mirror*? Jack Greenhall is retiring, you can change it to suit yourself into a single column but you must do one important thing." "What's that?" I said? "You must have a different first and last letter of the caption everyday, as there is a gambling feature around the country on >

those two letters daily–Simple". So I did it for nine years until the late Robert Maxwell arrived with a big broom, I can't say I enjoyed it and I am certain Jack Greenhall didn't, he made a far better job of it than I did.

I have always been interested in animation, I consider every human on this earth owes a debt to *Walt Disney* and his animators. We have all shared in his magic as children and it never dates. I first experienced animation at work in the London studio of Halas and Bachelor it was all a mystery to me so I hung around and eventually got involved. I had made a stop-go animated film with Woodland Films and a brilliant animator (to my shame his name escapes me) based on the Trolley men from my *Four D Jones* strip. Jon Halas saw it and invited me to his studio. The BBC were concerned that the Trolley men characters had wheels instead of legs and the word Thalidomide was used (unfortunately Thalidomide was in the news at that time) so it was never made into a series.

I spent some time working with animation, marvelling at the way it came together on the screen. To this day I don't understand the technical side of it but I loved to storyboard ideas and bring the film to life on paper, to create a series, write the script and to storyboard each episode for the animators to follow–Great fun. Apart from advertising British animation in Britain was considered to be only for children, like comics when I was a lad. The thinking was adults don't look at animation or read

comicshow wrong can you be? So I had to write for children.

My first film series was *The Family Ness*, based on a family of Loch Ness Monsters. I owe a debt of thanks to Gerry Lip, then cartoon editor to the *Daily Express* for getting me involved with this one, it was one hell of a struggle to get it running, Emma Dawson also helped to produce the series and get it on the screen. We raised the finance and got the BBC onboard and following a year of hard graft and lots of arguments and falling out the *Family Ness* was eventually broadcast and was shown regularly on the BBC over a period of twenty years.

Jimbo and the Jet-Set came after my drawing of a series of Dilbert owned by *British Airways* in the *Mail on Sunday*. I suggested we turned it into an animated series. The BBC said they were interested and I costed it and put it to the BA money people, however they were very involved with changing their tail colours and showed very little interest in financing the series.

So I came up with *Jimbo and the Jet-Set*, showed it to the BBC, they liked it and they commissioned twenty five, five minute films. This one I enjoyed, it worked and with the wonderful talents of Peter Hawkins and Susan Sheridan as voices (also from *Family Ness*) and the music of Roger Greenaway, *Jimbo* had seven years of fun with the BBC and still syndicates to this day.

I intended to follow the Jimbo series with a character called *Billy Kit-Car*; this was a small kit car that could turn itself into any vehicle simply by passing through a carwash. However, the ladies at the BBC said they preferred Penny Crayon as the lead character was a girl and could I use Sue Pollard as a voice for Penny? This I did and she was a joy to work with. Penny Crayon is a girl who could draw anything and the drawings came to life (it ran for seven years on BBC TV).

As *Maddocks Cartoon Productions Limited* my two sons were working

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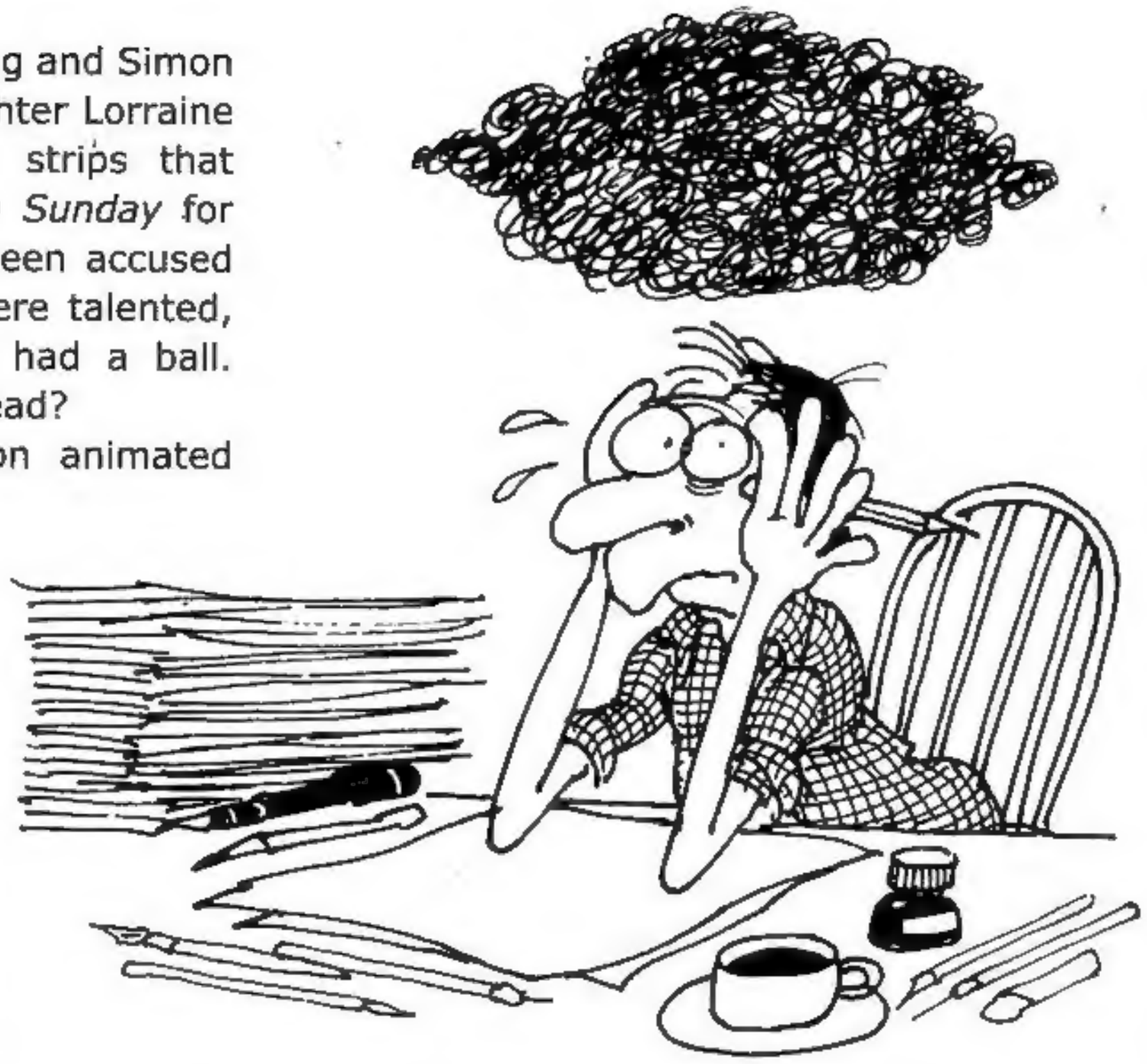
I also did illustrations daily for Ross Benson on the Daily Express *Diary page. Caricature doesn't come easy to me,so I had to work hard at it armed with lots of reference. Ross would phone me daily around midday (just befor his lunch) saying something like "I want Joan Collins at a table in the Ivy talking to Peter Ustinov... The waiter is a David Niven Lookalike..." End of message. It had to be faxed to him by four o'clock that afternoon... after a couple of years doing this I got quite good at Caricature.* The Daily Telegraph *city drawings were done every thursday at the city office. I was given complicated copy to read and I would search for an item to illustrate it there and then. They were all nice people at the* Telegraph*... I enjoyed my thursdays. I often received a phone call from a journalist reading his or her copy to me for me to illustrate and deliver within a couple of hours...the joys of having a studio on their doorstep in Fleet Street. Can you imagine what a mobile phone would have done for me those days...I would have also needed roller skates. The arrival of the copying machine was a bonus... but the fax machine was pure magic!!!*

with me Guy was directing and Simon was producing and daughter Lorraine coloured all the *Jimbo* strips that appeared in the *Mail on Sunday* for ten years. Yes, I have been accused of Nepotism but they were talented, reliable people and we had a ball. Who said family life is dead?

During all the work on animated films I continued drawing for the newspapers. I did the front page Topical Pocket Cartoon for the *Sunday Express* for ten years until it was printed so small it vanished out of sight. I also produced *Number 10* in the *Sunday Express*, a topical political strip first commissioned by the late great editor Jon Junior. This strip lasted twenty two years and ended with a phone call! (The hazards of being a freelancer).

The London School of Cartooning was something I started because so many people kept asking me "how do you become a cartoonist? Where do you start? What comes first, the drawing or the idea?". And I wore myself out showing people how, so I decided to put it down in a book. Elmtree Books published the first 'How to' book, 'So You Want To Be a Cartoonist?' I have produced many since and they were all very successful.

I was one of the founders of *The British Cartoonists Association* back in 1966. There were around fifty professionals that we know of, so we limited it to that figure. You had to be a professional cartoonist to join. The idea was to meet once or twice a year, eat a hearty meal at a different interesting venue with a guest speaker to entertain or enlighten us (mainly politicians i.e. Douglas Home, Enoch Powell, Harold Wilson etc.,) Our first president was Carl Giles of the Express. I was secretary, whose job it was to make it look as if everyone had turned up by accident, (a funny lot, cartoonists). In 1970 we had a magnificent cartoon exhibition at the National Portrait Gallery, opened by HRH Princess Margaret, followed by a cartoonist convention in May of that year. I flew to Los Angeles USA and invited the American Cartoonists to join us, it was all a great success. I am pleased to say, the association is still healthy and up and running today (note the young cartoonist of the year competition hosted by the BMA in November of this year).



I live in Spain now and I am retired. Cartooning over the years has done me proud, it's a job I loved doing and I earned a good living for both myself and my family. Fleet Street was my home. I spent almost 50 years drawing for most of the newspapers and magazines published there.

Now I paint and draw for myself in colour. As a cartoonist I had a recognisable style of drawing, as a painter I had no style at all, so I am enjoying trying to find one and I don't waste a day sitting in the sun. I no longer paint or draw 'for money, I live on my wits and my pensions and the way the pound is going against the euro I shall leave this world the same way as I came in on 1 April 1928–Happy but broke!

Adios amigos!

C: Thanks Peter... It's been a real pleasure! ●

Check out Peter's website for more information and see his on-line gallery at: www.petermaddocks.com